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Reyes tells probers: You're destroying AFP

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE MAN who used to command the country's Armed Forces had two sharp messages to lawmakers looking into alleged corruption in the military.

You may be destroying the armed forces of the Philippines—and even my teacher alone.

BEYOND 2A

Colonel Rabusa under house arrest

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Nestle Pupa

UNDER mounting pressure to stamp out corruption in its ranks, the Armed Forces has placed under house arrest a colonel alleged to have amassed unexplained wealth, as it prepares to open this week the trial of a general on account of snatching himself while in office.

CLICK/INQ. A2

Miriam exposes AFP 'Gang of 12'

Senator details graft in staff commands

"LEAVE up another above," Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes tells congressmen. [illegible]

By Michael Lim Ubac

A "GANG OF 12" presides over the Armed Forces of the Philippines which loses about P2 billion a year to the group's celebrated practice of "clearance and scarcerance," administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said yesterday.

Santiago, whose brother served as AFP chief of staff in the Arroyo administration, said "clearance" is, indeed the falsification of public documents, and "scarcerance" the malversation of public funds.

In a privilege speech, Santiago said the "Gang of 12" was made up of the chief of staff and his 11 staff generals (J-1 to J-11).

J-1 is for Personnel; J-2, Intelligence; J-3, Operations; J-4, Logistics; J-5, Plans; J-6, Communications; J-7, Civil Military Operations; J-8, Training; J-9, AFP Modernization; J-10, Reservists, and J-11, Communications.

The gang heads the "trade" or "mafia" that has institutionalized and many corruption since martial law days, according to the senator.

Santiago described the generals as some of "the most hypocritical, mercenary and lecherous public officials in this corrupt country."

She said the gang engaged in organized corruption through the so-called "clearance and conversion process."

"To 'clear' an officer, they ask military funds money to fill up all sorts of forms, particularly payrolls or deeds, with fake entries and signatures, in order to support the enrichment of the clique."

To "convert" a check means to encash it on the back of fake documents [illegible]

World oil reaches new high; Arroyo warns of tough times

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday urged Filipinos to brace themselves for higher prices amid increased power rates as world crude prices scaled a new high above $55 per barrel.

Oil light crude set a fresh peak of $55.37 per barrel, while London Brent soared a record $55.90 as threats by Nigerian shipowners to halt production in the world's third biggest exporter stoked fears of a winter supply crunch. World prices are up 70 percent since the start of the year.

The Norwegian Shipowners Association threatened to expand a lockout of oil rig workers to shut Norway's three million barrels per day oil output in a bid to end a nearly four-month labor dispute.

The new threat boosted a market already jittery over a supply outage in the US Gulf, which has disrupted the normal stockpiling of heating fuel ahead of winter. Hurricane Ivan, which tore through the Gulf of Mexico in mid-September, has slashed more than 400,000 barrels per day of crude output.

During a breakfast forum of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines, Ms Arroyo said Filipinos should brace themselves for tough times. She, however, voiced confidence she would prove doomsayers wrong by implementing reforms that would turn the economy around.

"Brace ours will go up before [illegible]

WORLD 2B, 3A

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo tells foreign correspondents that she will prove doomsayers wrong by turning the economy around. [illegible]

3 Basilan informers each get ₱18.7M

By TJ Burgonio

US EMBASSY officials yesterday rewarded three Basilan residents with P18.7 million each for providing vital information that led to the killing of an Abu Sayyaf gang leader.

US Embassy deputy chief Joseph Mussomeli handed over brown suitcases containing stacks of $7,000 bills to two men and one woman in a tightly guarded ceremony at the presidential hospital in suburbs, Basilan.

The three informants, who were baseball caps and hid their faces under thick brown markings, each unofficially accepted the P18.7 million. Their identities were being kept secret for security reasons.

"It takes courage to do what these three people have done, which makes them exactly the opposite of those we fight against," Mussomeli said, calling the Abu Sayyaf bandits "cowards for preying the weak and the helpless.

[illegible]

Guess who's coming to GMA dinner at Forbes Park

THE PERSONAL touch just might do the trick.

President Macapagal-Arroyo invited her eight-man Bilgual Corp. CEO Eduardo "Tandang" Cojuangco Jr., Ayala Museum chair Lucio Tan and Philip Morris Philippines managing director Chris Sebescio to her Forbes Park residence to make their support for her proposed taxes on "sin products" (cigarettes and alcohol).

The meeting was confirmed by two of the corporations' invited by the President, who is aiming her hopes on the cutoff passage of the Indonesian of taxes on cigarettes and alcohol pro- [illegible]

BUSINESS, 1A

Brazilian named Miss Earth

PRISCILLA Meirelles, a medical student from Brazil, was named Miss Earth 2004 on Sunday winning a beauty pageant that provides environmental concerns.

Twenty-one-year-old Meirelles beat 68 other candidates for the title.

There were no first or runner-up finishers in the competition with each of the final four receiving a title. Emma Gonzalez, a 24-year-old marketing student from Paraguay, was named Miss Fire; Meirelle Colemero, an 18-year-old student from Martinique, was Miss Air; and Stephanie Lesage, a 20-year-old social economics student from Tahiti, was Miss Water.

The Miss Earth pageant, launched three years ago by a Philippine production outfit, is [illegible]

MISS Earth 2004 is Brazil's Priscilla Meirelles (2nd from left). She is flanked by runners-up (from left) Paraguay's Emma Gonzalez, Miss Fire; Martinique's Meirelle Colemero, Miss Air, and Tahiti's Stephanie Lesage, Miss Water.

Metro quake scenario: 147,000 dead, injured

IF WORSE take just seconds 147,000 people would be dead or wounded, entire neighborhoods would be swallowed up by the earth, and hundreds of fires would turn structures still standing in Metro Manila.

As Japan reels from last week's earthquake that left 26 people dead, city planners of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority are taking seriously the threat of a major earthquake after a two-year study by Japanese and Filipino seismologists.

The research has triggered a review of the capital's rescue units. Changes to the country's building code and land use laws are also being considered, according to Junior Santiago, MMDA director for special operations and public safety.

"There are worse-case scenarios, and there are planning figures. Those may not necessarily happen," Santiago added.

But the figures are worrying nevertheless.

A 7.2 magnitude quake with the epicenter within city limits would kill up to 35,000 and destroy 175,000 of its 1.1 million-plus buildings, according to the Metropolitan Manila Earthquake Impact Reduction Study that was completed in March.

It would leave 300 simultaneous fires erupt from the wreckage, dozens would surge the 134,000 injured outside Manila hospitals with a combined capacity of just 13,000 beds. Three million residents would be left homeless.

The last time the capital faced a similar level of destruction was during World War II when American forces were liberating Manila.

[illegible]

A3
WEATHER FORECAST
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2004
Second FRONTPAGE

PNP begins 'morale check' in the ranks

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE LEADERSHIP of the Philippine National Police has begun a "morale check" in the 115,000-strong force in the wake of the simmering allegations of large-scale corruption in the military and in the PNP itself.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno in fact the term by sending a memorandum to all top officials and field commanders of the Philippine National Police Office.

On top of the memorandum, he has also been visiting police districts offices and stations to personally check on the morale of policemen and "to keep them informed about the position of the PNP leadership on current issues."

In fact, he said, morale remained "high."

In the memorandum, Puno asked his men not to buy the rumors now circulating as a result of supposed widespread demoralization in the ranks of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and even the PNP.

Exploiters

"The rumors were coming from those" who want to exploit the corruption scandal now rocking the military he said, without elaborating.

The AFP is in the eye of a storm because of allegations that its former comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia —and possibly other top officials—had switched their salaries while in the service.

Garcia stands accused of pocketing some P100 million-plus in cash consisting of currency and real estate built here and abroad.

Large-scale graft

As the military controversy raged, a number of police officers had revealed similar large-scale corruption in the PNP.

In separate interviews, the sources detailed how some top police officials were making aid from through fund conversion, securing acquisition orders irregularly, and through the "much more lucrative" schemes involving personnel services and salaries.

Despite the allegations, Razon was optimistic the country could "withstand the crisis as it has a mature political system that could ensure that justice and the rule of law will prevail."

"Let's focus on our tasks and responsibilities, let us not be behaved by this scandal," he said, urging PNP officers to a statement to bolster reforms within the police organization.

Continuing activity

The reforms include the libretto check the 1960's gendarme body, the Internal Affairs Service, is conducting initially on all personnels until full colonels [ranks] are considered.

Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP information officer, yesterday described the 162 investigation as a "continuing activity not just a three-pick manner" in the corruption controversy.

(Dedicated to the memory of the Rich, Goodie or Heroics — Killed by Indifference and Greed — who must have sprung but never grew to live in the mind of the Filipino Child)

THE NINETY-FIVE THESES OF TEXTBOOK REFORM

Recommendations geared towards a top-to-bottom reform in the country's textbook program, in order to achieve quality in the Philippine educational system, as stipulated in the Constitution.

Declaration of Textbook Policy

Section 10 of Republic Act 8047 (Book Publishing Industry Development Act) mandates the Department of Education (DepEd) to evaluate, select and approve the textbooks that will be used in all public schools nationwide. The DepEd must prescribe and recommend, by means of a new and final List of Approved Textbooks, which books are to be used in public primary and secondary schools. These textbooks must have passed the evaluation (content) and quality production standards (form) of the Department. Only textbooks included in this List may be adopted by the local school boards.

Student Access to Textbooks

The DepEd should endeavor to provide one text-book per pupil/student per subject in all public schools. The textbooks that a class is using for a particular subject should be uniform, meaning to say, of the same title, same authors, same publisher and same edition. The DepEd should prescribe a single title per subject per grade/year level in schools within a region.

Textbook Procurement

The DepEd shall procure quality textbooks from the educational publishing industry following accepted government procurement laws. The bidding and awarding of contracts must be recommended by a body or bodies outside of the DepEd's own Bids and Awards Committee.

Textbooks shall be purchased every five years, to the years thereafter, these books should be subjected to a review to determine whether they will still be adopted for the next five years or not. Books should be changed when they are no longer relevant or adequate. The DepEd should purchase textbooks in by series (not individual subject and title) in subjects (English, Science and Math) which need to show curricular continuity and progression.

Foreign-assisted projects supported by loan covenants require international competitive bidding. The bidding and awarding of contracts must be closely monitored and regulated. The printing of textbooks in other countries must not be made a condition of these loan agreements. Philippine public school textbooks should be printed in the Philippines. Vacuum this will generate jobs and income for Filipinos and not foreigners.

The distribution and delivery of textbooks must likewise be closely monitored and supervised. Governments must come from the non-government sector.

The Process of Evaluation

1. The DepEd shall oversee a textbook evaluation process that includes the expert judgment of accredited academicians, educators, education administrators, and school and curriculum specialists.

2. A two-step process of evaluation should be implemented:

a. Two evaluators from the private sector;

b. Two reviewers from the DepEd itself, with one reviewer coming from a newly constituted Textbook Reform and Development Commission and the other sourced from either the Bureau of Elementary Education (in the case of grade school books) or the Bureau of Secondary Education (for high school books) to validate the recommendations of the two evaluators from the private sector.

3. Only textbooks which get the approval of at least three members of the Evaluating Panel will be adopted.

4. The identities of both evaluators and reviewers must not be kept secret. Their names must be listed upon on the cover of the book which they approved.

5. Evaluators must not include employees of the DepEd.

6. Evaluators and reviewers must not be related in any way to any of the authors or publisher of the book which they are reviewing.

7. Evaluators must be paid a sum which is commensurate to the gravity of the task assigned to them. Raise the honorarium from the present P1,500 or P1,800 to a value from P3,000 to P10,000 (depending on the number of pages) per book per evaluator. This fee should be charged to the publisher wanting to have his book reviewed.

8. Evaluators must be given ample time within which to review the textbooks assigned to them: at least two weeks for each grade school book and one month or more for each high school book.

9. Evaluators must be given complete freedom and authority to conduct research and study while in the course of reviewing textbooks.

Textbook Standards (Content)

The DepEd shall establish the necessary standards (form and content) to guide the local textbook industry in the development of new instructional materials. All previously approved titles must undergo review and re-evaluation. To check for integrity in the area of content, the following concerns must be taken into account:

- Factual errors
- Conceptual errors
- Bias and prejudice (racial, religious, cultural, social and gender)
- Negative influences on moral virtues or values

All textbooks approved by the DepEd and included in its List should contain no more than (point) (20) grave errors. Twenty grave errors in a textbook effectively render it defective. Approved textbooks with more than 20 errors must undergo corrections and revisions.

The Canon of Philippine Literature (a collection of literary pieces prescribed by the DepEd for high school reading) must be reviewed and upgraded. Selections such as Paul Dumol's documentary Pagbitiw ni Mang Serapio (which contains that now-famous passage: Peyot na peyot, buyag-buyo pa, walang-alalayang wala ng-iisang-mosiki) and Jun Cruz Reyes' tactfulness and offensive Unang Hati should be excluded from the new list of prescribed selections.

The DepEd must publish a comprehensive list of names, terms, events, technical innovations and scientific processes that should not be translated into Filipino (e.g. Iglesia ni Cristo for yellow race; kidlatang kapatid for half-brother; etc.).

The Need for Legislative Intervention

1. The mandate of the DepEd includes accountability for the quality of basic education. Its duty is to conduct a thorough and objective evaluation of all textbooks in use with the interest of the general public as the foremost consideration.

A law must be passed declaring the making of defective textbooks, whether used in public or private schools, a crime with a corresponding punishment. When a textbook in use is found to be defective, its authors, editors, publisher, and the DepEd evaluators and reviewers who passed it should be held criminally liable; all of these elements should be made to shoulder, in equal portions, the total cost of corrections and revisions, aside from the criminal liabilities.

2. Textbooks must be included in the list of goods, projects and services covered by the Government Procurement Reform Law (R.A. 9184).

3. The Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS) and other related agencies with similar functions should be dissolved and a new body — the Textbook Reform and Development Commission — established in their place. All previous transactions of the DepEd pertaining to the procurement, evaluation and delivery of textbooks must be reviewed.

4. The National Book Development Board which has not done anything to develop and improve the quality of Philippine textbooks should be abolished.

5. Reassess the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) in used as a guide in the development of textbooks, the BEC itself must be reviewed and re-constructed. The lumping together of six or more unrelated subjects in the general subject now known as HMC-AIR/PAN is very very wrong. The most precarious of the Three-Shift Session (three classes using the same classroom one after the other in one day) presently being implemented in many public schools must be discontinued. There must be Science subjects in Grades One and Two. The continuing factualization of our National Language (mandated by the BEC's Secondary Filipino Language Curriculum) must be stopped.

6. Every citizen must be given the right to look into the quality of textbooks being used in the public schools without fear of harassment or retaliation.

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Zamboanga turns monitors away

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Mayor Celso Lobregat yesterday turned down a plan to house refugee-type monitoring team in this city, fearing the move could incite violence.

The refusal prompted officials to look for other bases for the 60 Malaysian and European peace keepers, who arrived in the Philippines earlier this month in by the groundwork for overseeing a year-old cease-fire between Muslim rebels and the government.

The team is to be deployed to the outside of Mindanao between government troops and Muslim rebels

NEW OLD CHOPPERS FOR AFP
The Armed Forces of the Philippines yesterday took delivery of three refurbished UH-1H helicopters from Singapore Technologies Aerospace Engineering, part of the 30-helicopter order from the firm under the AFP modernization program. The 20 helicopters, costing a total of P539.8 million, are equipped with night-flying equipment.
(JOHN BAZ CUIZON)

Bush or Kerry? GMA won't say who she's for

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

DAVAO, a diplomatic neutral position on the United States presidential election, President Macapagal-Arroyo expressed confidence Philippine relations with its former colonizer would remain strong and vigorous.

"I don't speculate on the politics of another country," she said after she was asked at the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippine Inquirer yesterday if she believed MPAD relations would change if Democratic candidate Sen. John Kerry defeated US President George W. Bush in November.

No meddling in US politics

Ms Arroyo did not even want to say if suggesting the US-led invasion of Iraq had been the right thing to do.

"It's a political issue that is being used in the US political campaign and, as I said, since I don't want to meddle in the politics of another country, I don't think it is right for me to comment on the righteousness of that war," she told the annual meeting of Philippine correspondents of international news organizations.

But she said Philippine support for the war against terror "greatly enhanced" the country's capacity to fight local terror groups.

"What I can say is that we've tried our best to be a good ally and we've been mutually beneficial. Without our partnership with our allies in the war against terrorism, regardless of whether some of the details were correct or not in the politics of our allies, has brought us a lot of capability to upgrade our own military and defense forces to win our own battles," Ms Arroyo said.

'Debatable issues'

She said the legality of the war on Iraq was for an international court to decide.

She said the question of whether the world had become a better place after the US drove Saddam Hussein from power was one of the "debatable issues."

"My main concern is, of course, our safety in our own country and what I can say is that we have been able to really degrade the capability of the terrorists, especially the Abu Sayyaf, and we're working on degrading the capability of communist terrorists," she said.

Ms Arroyo said that helping by non-paper headlines, RP-US relations were "as vigorous as ever" despite her decision to withdraw Philippine troops from Iraq to save the life of truck driver Angelo de la Cruz in July.

She said countries may share the same goals even if they do not always walk on the same road.

'Partner, not master'

"And I suppose the Angelo de la Cruz case, while it was a shocker to our allies in the beginning, did demonstrate that we look upon our allies as partners, rather than our masters," Ms Arroyo said.

She said that despite the controversy, the Philippines remained committed to fighting terrorism and was one of the "success stories" in that regard.

She said any country considers its foreign policy an instrument of its national interest.

"And I believe that while it [withdrawal from Iraq] was surprising in the beginning, I think our allies have come to understand that," she said.

Increased assistance

She said this was evident after the US released some of its $50-million "peace dividend" in Mindanao even before the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front signed a peace accord.

She said the US Senate had also just approved "increased" military assistance to the Philippines.

"So I'm very grateful for these signs of a continuing vigorous relationship with the US and our other allies and I'm glad they are there as partnerships in very many ways," she said.

Former dean would take UP into the mainstream

By Pol Catotrera

A MORE media-savvy UP? (dealers tip dispute reasoning intelligent TV shows?

Meet Dan, superb. Georgina Encanto, one of the candidates for next president of the University of the Philippines.

But the veteran mass communication and journalism professor, the public has been missing out on the wealth of scientific research, sociopolitical discourses and other creative output churned out by UP students, faculty and think tanks.

Greater impact

In a recent interview, Encanto said she hoped to see more of the kind of impact generated by the "UP 11"—the group of economic professors who warned in a paper that the country was headed toward economic collapse unless the government reined in the ballooning budget deficit and foreign debt.

Not everyone may agree with the UP 11, Encanto said, but the publicity their work generated was an example of how the university could "get back into the mainstream."

From the latest findings in the natural sciences, to the avant garde visions of "Iboyan" film students and writers, to the advocacies of the various UP centers of excellence, all these "may just go to waste because we've not been that outspoken," Encanto, 58, said.

"Iboyan, because they relate to our current issues and problems. We have not really found a way to use the media to disseminate all that information," she said.

UP colleges and study centers representing the various disciplines should be more aggressive in translating their rather technical materials for a lay audience, she said.

Airtime for UP shows

She said she would explore the possibility of securing airtime for UP-produced educational programs, especially in the government-owned networks.

In an earlier talk with the press, Encanto said she hoped to realize her plans by finding new funding sources outside the cash-strapped government. She noted that UP computes with over 180 state colleges and universities for subsidies.

Hoping to be at its helm when UP marks its centennial on June 10, 2008, Encanto spoke of tapping alumni resources and forging "mutually beneficial" linkages with the business community.

Centennial candidate

Encanto is one of 19 candidates being considered by the UP Board of Regents to succeed current president Francisco "Dodong" Nemenzo.

The board, which governs UP's seven campuses, 14,000 faculty members and more than 50,000 students nationwide, is expected to announce its decision on Nov. 17.

Encanto graduated with an AB English and Comparative Literature degree, magna cum laude, from the UP in 1967. She obtained her master degree at Brandeis University in the United States. She became dean of the UP Institute of Mass Communication at age 29 in 1980 and served until 1993.

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☐ Nov. 13 p.m.	3/Updates in Criminal Law 3/Updates in Constitutional & Election Law	Justice Dondalds M. Perello Justice Regalado E. Maambong
☐ Nov. 20 a.m.	3/Trial & Pre-trial Skills 3/MCLE Prescribed: Environmental Law	Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval Justice Oswaldo Agcaoili
☐ Nov. 20 p.m.	3/Legal Ethics 3/International Law	Justice Jose L. Sabio, Jr. Prof. Harry H.L. Roque, Jr.
☐ Nov. 27 a.m.	3/Legal Writing 3/Updates in Civil & Criminal Procedure	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez, Jr. Justice Ricardo L. Rivera
☐ Nov. 27 p.m.	3/Alternative Dispute Resolution 3/Updates in Remedial Law	Dean Custodio O. Parlade Justice Rodolfo P. Galvez
☐ Dec. 04 a.m.	3/Alternative Dispute Resolution 3/Trial & Pre-trial Skills	Dean Froilan M. Bacungan Justice Martin L. Agyao
☐ Dec. 04 p.m.	3/Legal Ethics 3/MCLE Prescribed: Technology & the Law	Justice Rufus T. Reyes Justice Regalado E. Maambong

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Pegis Forum, Inc. 6th Floor Chatham House, 116 Valero cor. Herrera Sts., Salcedo Village Makati City

Colonel Rabusa under house arrest

Front page A1 »

Nearing their second hr-to-whitewash, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the start before Friday of court-martial proceedings against former military comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia.

Her order coincided with a military announcement that Garcia's fugitive budget officer, Army Col. George Rabusa, had also been "restricted to quarters"—in house arrest, in civilian terms—like his former boss.

"The house of the Filipino soldier is at stake, and I am confident that the judges to which it will conduct themselves with absolute fealty to the Constitution, the people and the command," Ms. Arroyo told the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines, which comprises journalists from 16 international news organizations.

Ms. Arroyo said she had ordered outgoing Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya to start court-martial proceedings against Garcia "before he (Abaya) retires Friday."

"There shall be no whitewash in the investigation and prosecution of anomalies in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, AFP, Bureau of Internal Security, Security Group and any other investigations for that matter," she declared.

No firing frenzy

But she said she would not be compelled into a firing frenzy by officers and groups using the corruption scandal in the Armed Forces to try and pin down her government.

"I have no sympathy at all for profiteering and shady business practices. But on the other hand, I will not allow the terrorists insurgents and their fronts and groundmasters to be my firing and firing committee," Ms. Arroyo said.

In a press conference, AFP Deputy Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Roberto Adan said Rabusa had been restricted to his quarters in Camp Aguinaldo effective last Saturday.

"The purpose of his restriction is to make Lt. Col. Rabusa available for any investigation involving him in connection with reports and allegations of unexplained wealth," Adan said.

Under guard

This means Rabusa can move around only under guard and with the permission of his commanding officer, Brig. Gen. Alexander Aleta of the AFP's Headquarters Service Command. Adan said initial charges against Rabusa were dropped by the Ombudsman in February but year for lack of sufficient evidence after the accused and his wife produced documents explaining where their assets had come from.

But the dismissal was "without prejudice to the reopening of the case should there be other evidence that will come up," Adan said, adding that the AFP had reinstituted investigating Rabusa.

Documents from probers

"In recent weeks, three Saturdays ago, we received from investigative agencies and we feel it is necessary to make Lt. Col. Rabusa available. That is why this restriction to quarters," Adan explained.

Adan could not say if Rabusa's restriction to quarters was related to Garcia's case, adding only that investigative agencies had acquired documents "that (Lt. Col. Rabusa) has to explain."

Adan did not name the agencies or disclose the nature of the documents.

Adan said Rabusa had not been charged with any new cases of ill-gotten wealth.

"We have not reached that point," he said. "We have documents to show how much (wealth). But what we can say is that in the succeeding days, as the investigation progresses, we will find out what charges he will be facing. We cannot be specific about it at this time."

Rabusa's fate

Adan could not tell if Rabusa's restriction to quarters and the commencement of his investigation would lead to court-martial proceedings against the colonel.

"We will find out if there are violations of the articles of war ... The first step is always to gather evidence. That is important and that takes time. When you have gathered evidence, you can file the case (all the way to court martial). What's important is you have competent evidence."

According to his service record, Rabusa was assigned under Garcia to the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Comptrollership (J-8) on Nov. 4, 1999. He was relieved from J-8 in 2002 and assigned as commander of the 42nd Infantry Battalion in Samar the same year. Prior to his restriction to quarters, he was chief of supervision of the Central Command based in Cebu City.

Documents showed that Rabusa had a P30 million savings deposit in the AFP Savings and Loan Association Inc., known in the Sea, Manila, in Bicol (1994, Pasilidapat, and at the AFP Officers' Village Association Inc. in Fort Bonifacio, and seven vehicles.

Feliciano Commission

Rabusa, who has a gross monthly income of P28,029, appeared last week before the hearings of the House committee on national defense investigating corruption in the military.

Ms. Arroyo told the foreign correspondents that her administration was vigorously implementing the recommendations of the Feliciano Commission, which investigated the cases of last year's Oakwood mutiny.

The commission had recommended, among other things, limiting the AFP comptroller's term to not more than three years.

"To end the graft dragnet further and widen the military Department's budget has been augmented as it can have 20 new lawyers," she said.

She also said an independent Internal Affairs Office was created in the military to review its procurement and financial systems and to receive grievances and complaints directly from soldiers in the field.

Proposed judges

A ranking general consented to sit at the court-martial of Garcia and the court would conduct its proceedings in a professional manner.

"As professional soldiers, we will do our best to execute the orders of the chief of staff," Maj. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, commander of the Philippine Army's 2nd Infantry Division, said in a phone interview.

Eight senior officers, including Cabuay, have been nominated to the military court. The other officers were Maj. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio, Central Command chief based in Cebu; Brig. Gen. Jesus Visitacion, 4th Infantry commander; Maj. Gen. Allan Cubalquiz, Special Operations Command chief; Maj. Gen. Edwin Gingan, deputy chief of staff for Civil Military Operations (J-7); Rear Admiral Abraham Almonzan, deputy chief of staff for electronics, communications and information systems (J-11); Brig. Gen. Jose Angel Honrado, assistant to the deputy chief of staff for CMO (J-7), and Col. Gladstone Aguilar, assistant, Judge Advocate General.

Members of the court will sit as a jury and decide on a group by majority vote. The rules stipulate that a general court-martial must have six to nine (for members.

Corrections

IN THE OCT. 25 issue, a headline in a front page article—"My kids were kept away from me, says ex-Baguio"—was erroneously accompanied by the photo of Imelda Pineda should have been used.

JOSE GARCIA

IMELDA PINEDA

The caption for the Baguio photo on Page A10 of the Entertainment section also mistakenly identified Garcia as Pineda.

* * *

IN THE OCT. 24 issue, a front-page story..."Veer Manila IMAH helped these three entrepreneurs"—and a photo caption on Page B8 misspelled the name of the owner of A&E Designs. The correct spelling is Alain B. Lacsamana—not Lazamana.

* * *

IN THE OCT. 23 issue, a front-page story..."Baldo's son claims he owns cocks on Reyes lot"—mistyped the selling price of a cock aged between 14 months and two years. The farm sells a cock in this age group for P6,500—not P6 million.

* * *

IN THE OCT. 22 issue, a front-page story—"Reyes owns cock farm in Pandacan"—misstated the net worth that Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes declared in his 2003 Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth. In his SALN, the former Armed Forces chief of staff and defense secretary declared a net worth of P9.3 million—not P38 million. Reyes also declared that his total assets amounted to P9,842,624.32 and his total liabilities to P39,202,015.91.

* * *

Readers may send their responses by text or letter of [illegible] to Chris Lim, 4th edition Philippine Daily Inquirer, PSI Building, Chino Roces Avenue cor. Makati Ave., Makati City; fax this: 403-2650; e-mail addresses gdlim@inquirer.com.ph and gdlim04@inquirer.com.ph.

Corrections about [illegible] or [illegible] may be sent to the [illegible] readers' ombudsman. The entire address is: Office of the Ombudsman, and e-mail address is ombudsman@inquirer.com.ph.

Metro quake scenario: 147,000 dead, injured

Front page A1

AN LIFTARMED soldier helps to truck out a damaged road following a series of powerful earthquakes at Ojiya, northern Japan over the weekend. AFP

Scientists also worried about the threat of liquefaction, or soluble ground, of underground water triggered by huge quakes and/or the ground, transforming up-over-firm stone to.

Parts of the metropolis, including the coastal areas along Manila Bay and Pasig River delta, are more vulnerable to liquefaction than elsewhere because they sit on soft sediments instead of more stable volcanic rock, he added.

Jennings said the military had a battalion-size unit of about 500 specially trained engineers. The MMDA has a thousand, while the cities of Marikina and Makati also have specialized units.

However, the capabilities of each district varies, and "our fire-suppression capacities cannot cope" with 100 simultaneous fires reported, he said.

"But we are now trying to strengthen their fire safety inspections and we undertake[n] their education campaign in the prevention," Jennings said. JEY

Iranti Japanese reconnaissance forces.

Used to disasters

"We are used to disasters," said Renato Solidum, head of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, citing the 19 severe and typhoons that whip the Southeast Asian archipelago every year.

"However, responding to typhoons and earthquakes are two different things," Solidum added.

Although five quakes hit the Philippines every day, few if any are felt. Only three major, destructive tremors have been recorded in more than 30 years—and about 75 in the last 400 years, Solidum told Agence France Presse.

In August 1976, a tremor from the Moro Gulf slammed into the southwest coast of Mindanao after a quake that measured 7.9 on the Richter scale. The tsunami killed 3,700 people.

A 7.8-magnitude quake in July 1990 left more than 1,600 dead in Baguio City and nearby areas, while 78 people died in a 7.1 temblor on Masbate island in November 1994.

However, not one earthquake has hit Manila, now one of Asia's largest metropolises with more than 10 million residents, Solidum said.

Fearing a repeat of the Baguio quake, joint teams of the US Geological Survey and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology set out in the mid-1990s to map out the country's active fault systems.

The Philippines sees sought Japan's help to study Metro Manila's vulnerability.

The study team looked at "possible earthquake generators" from nearby active faults in the earth's crust, including the offshore Manila Trench and the Valley Fault system on the Manila-Ing Valley.

The 1990s surveys concluded that the Valley Fault had "moved at least four times for the past 1,400 years," Solidum said. "If it had moved before, it can move in the near future."

When science can not predict exactly when the Valley Fault would move. But it can examine how buildings and structures would behave.

Devastating

Based on the movies, designs, ages and geological loads, farmers of Metro Manila's structures, the Japanese-headed

Miriam exposes AFP 'Gang of 12'

From page A1

merits, and subsequently, to divide the cash among the generals concerned, the supplier, the supplier's agent who was usually an active female, and—only if absolutely necessary—the official/proponent staff, according to hearings.

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"In other words, 'conversion' is a euphemism for the crime of malversation of public funds, most often involving ghost deliveries, under-delivery or overpricing. If the amount involved is over P50 million, then 'conversion' is a euphemism for the crime of plunder," she said.

As an example, Santiago said that supposing P1 billion was earmarked as initial money to a group supposed to command (Northern Luzon Command, Southern Luzon Command, Central Command, Cebu, Southern Command, Zamboanga), the 14 would secure from the budget a deposit insert an official Government relief fare (Special Allotment and Release Order), which notifies the general headquarters that a cash allocation had been made and was ready for release.

After 15 warrants the fancy "P1 or three Cheer this," the said. Consequently, certain purchase orders would be secured, and "in five days, without any delivery, the money is "cleared," she said.

If the amount was P10 million, it would be similarly divided as follows:

- P1.5 million or 15 percent would go to the suppliers and he shares that with the comptroller, auditor, logistics officer and members of the acquisition committee;
- P1.5 million, another 15 percent, would go to the local commander such as Southcom;
- P7 million, 70 percent, would go to the chief of staff, who may or may not share it with the rest of the Gang of 12.

Wounded soldiers, tires

At the hearing of the committees on national defense and on banks in the House of Representatives, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes could it was possible that conversion was being practiced in the military.

But Reyes said he never resorted to conversion during his stint as AFP chief of staff.

He said conversion may be resorted to when wounded soldiers are brought for treatment to hospitals, which demand deposits and payments for medicine and doctors' fees.

Immediate cash, he said, was also necessary in case the tires of military equipment engaged in combat were punctured.

"You have to have cash to buy tires, otherwise your military jeeps won't run. Hospitals demand deposits and if you don't have cash, your soldier dies. You send your soldiers to fight and die for the country and you don't give them the money for the treatment? There's no appropriations for that. You also have to give money for the bereaved families."

Asked how the problem of conversion could be solved, Reyes said the government must abolish no-read, no-answer, nationwide orders formation.

Richest source

Santiago said AFP conversion was the "richest source of graft money," which Col. Ariel Querubin, the late "most spectacular way for graft," because no office was filled daily with "Filipino Chinese, army and navy women, and the special friends of army of corrupt generals."

"There is a lesser 15 commander, and I'll show you a very rich man. Most military operations proved to be failures, because most operational money went to conversion," she said.

Alluding to suspended Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, former AFP comptroller, Santiago claimed that all staff generals were beholden to the comptroller because he controlled the release of funds.

"The comptroller has power to release funds," she said, pointing to the chief of staff issues (the secretary aide). Somehow I suffer the suspicion that the extremely close ties between the comptroller and the chief of staff covered the bounds of religious fellowship. Based on experience, it appears that if the comptroller is guilty of malversation, the chief of staff is also accountable guilty of the same crime, for one cannot triumphs without the other," she said.

She is not Mr. Untouchable; he is Mr. Clockwork. Money sticks to his hands like glue," she added, referring to the comptroller.

Santiago said 1.7 total military operations had the easiest system for clearing and conveying military funds.

"Through the Civil Relations Service, 1.7 allegedly forges government forms, getting those persons for every signature, plus an added two percent from the desire, she said.

Sen. Ramon J. Ge at any one time emerged as on four because is made sure that his successors were potential proteges, who could be depended upon to protect the "system," according to Santiago.

Unliquidated cash advances

She said only unmotivated corruption could explain why according to the Commission on Audit, as of Dec. 31, 2003, the military had incurred total unliquidated cash advances of P1.448 billion.

She proposed that the Senate committee ensure that the 2005 military budget contains anti-corruption measures such as the prompt liquidation of all cash advances, physical count of deliveries and of persons receiving salaries.

Santiago asked the chamber to authorize the committees on national defense and security and on finance to conduct inquiry into the feasibility of establishing next year an independent commission to provide solutions to "institutionalized military corruption."

She said she didn't mind if her brother, Benjamin Defensor, was summoned to the inquiry.

She advised in the integrity of her brother amid talk that assigning chiefs of staff received hefty financial "send-off package" ranging from P300 million to P600 million.

Santiago said her brother, who retired in 2001 after a two-month stint as AFP chief of staff, was not the type of man to be involved in corruption. "I have personal knowledge of the strength of his moral character," she said.

She said the 1987 Constitution should be amended, particularly section 2 Section 3, which provides that "The Armed Forces of the Philippines is the protector of the people and the State."

"The correct provision lived in the military and police is no overemphasis at this time that the Constitution should be amended to state: 'The Armed Forces of the Philippines is the protector of the people and the State, and is better afraid/afraid in favor of a citizen's army.'"

Fall of Rome

Santiago reminded the chamber that the country could suffer the same fate as the Roman empire should the "rank" be allowed to continue with its operations.

She said that in his 1988 book, "Corruption and the Decline of Rome," historian MacMullen, professor of classics and history at Yale University, observed that "the decline of Rome "became an accomplished fact when the entire Senate average."

Santiago noted that most, if not all, of the "disciplinary" of corruption in the military were graduates of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). reports from Cynthia D. Rabano, Nef Gutierrez and Christine O. Avendaño

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Reyes tells probers: You're destroying AFP

From page A1

Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes told the House committees on national defense and banks yesterday that while he believed that proceedings were necessary in aid of legislation, imputations of alleged irregularities in the AFP as a whole were eroding the public view he used to belong to.

"I believe that these inquiries compose in the sub-text you are objectively alleging that former AFP comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia had amassed wealth—estimated by one institution at P500 million—beyond his legitimate income.

In his opening statement to the committees, Reyes disagreed with the lawmakers' view, expressing concern about the possible repercussions of the congressional inquiry.

"I feel that, as the proceedings have been going on, there are perceptions that impressions of some members [are] resulting in broad-brush indictments, like pinning the tail on the institution of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the very institution that has been preserving the state and its people, is slowly being destroyed," Reyes said.

Wrecking reputations

Rep. Rodolfo Selim (Kampi, Pembangsil, 2nd Dist.) Reyes said that, as a result of the inquiry, there was necessary to view of the former AFP chief's expertise. Reyes could also help Congress draft remedial legislation to address the problems in the AFP, Selim added.

"There is a limit to this, your honor," Reyes snapped back.

The moment names are implicated and later on (they) turn out to be innocent, their character assassination had already been done. Now, who will remedy that situation after the hearing?" Reyes said.

"You may provide people to be (ill-), Secretary Reyes," Golez said, referring to the police practice of parading before the media people arrested on suspicion of criminal activities.

"But they are suspects, your honor," Reyes shot back.

Reyes flares up

At one point, Rep. Jose Marcos (DR., Ilocos Norte) pressed Reyes about his reported huge assets and property.

Reyes said that everything was reflected in the statements of assets and liabilities that he filed every year.

He said most of his property came from his inheritance and that he had some P4 million in a joint bank account with his 84-year-old mother.

"The money, he said, belonged to his mother and they decided to acquire the account to their names as co-owners.

Reyes said he would be happy to accommodate Marcos' request to furnish the committees with his SSL of the last five years.

When Reyes asked that he also furnish them with the records of his mother's finances, Marcos replied, "Ayaw niya."

"Your honor, you know my mother since. You know my family since," he said.

Not a suspect

Golez assured Reyes that his request not to drag his mother into the inquiry would be duly noted by committee members.

Asked by Marcos what happened to the gun's users against him in the past, Reyes said he had already explained his wealth and had been cleared by the Office of the Ombudsman.

Golez told Reyes that he was invited as a resource person, not as a suspect.

But Reyes warned that the testifying of the committee invitation that and his presence at the hearing was necessary, having been the AFP chief of staff who supposedly recommended Garcia to be the deputy chief of staff for comptrollership.

Reyes revealed that the denial of Garcia's appointment on the Garcia appointment five days after he retired as chief of staff on March 17, 2004 and that he was succeeded by Gen. Dionardo Villanueva.

At an earlier hearing, Villanueva had said that Garcia's appointment as comptroller occurred during Reyes' tenure.

Generals' recommendation

Reyes submitted to the committees a copy of the March 22, 2004, resolution of the Board of Generals, recommending Garcia to 3-4 and signed by its members, including Santiago.

Rep. Edna Lopez Cabo, Manila, chair of the committee on banks and financial intermediaries, said Reyes could help the committees by giving his insights on the issues being raised against the AFP officials in the ongoing congressional inquiry.

Let's help one another," Lopez said.

Reyes said he would be happy to clarify certain issues with the committees provided he would not be forced to implicate other people in the military organization.

"I would not want to be forced by their position character assassination," he said.

Reyes also agreed with Golez's observation that Garcia's appointment were pending the re-position.

World oil reaches new high

From page A8

they go down. I think that is the cheaper hardship that will be there. That is a very big contribution to the inflation rate which will be higher than it has been during my administration," she said.

Ms Arroyo said she expected her popularity ratings to slump, but added she was prepared to suffer the consequences of unpopular decisions needed to finance development and cure widening poverty amid a financial crisis brought on by a ballooning deficit and growing debt.

The sluggish economy coupled with a looming energy crisis and rising global oil prices, prompted a group of US economists last month to warn of an Argentina-style financial meltdown should the country default on its debt payments.

"Math my words the doomsayers' projection for the Philippines will never happen, not under my watch, and if we are able to do the things we know we have planned and for the medium term, not in our lifetime," Ms Arroyo told Manila-based foreign correspondents.

"The pain for me will be steep. My ratings will slump as we suffer treatment constraints and I will be blamed for the increase in poverty and clean up the mess we inherited," she said.

Ms Arroyo said reforms were necessary to achieve her plan of balancing the budget and getting economic growth in accelerate to 7 percent by the time she leaves office in 2010.

The economy in the second quarter expanded 6.3 percent, up from 6.1 percent in first quarter, but short of expectations related to the May presidential election.

Ms Arroyo said investor confidence would be bolstered by the passage in Congress of key fiscal reform measures, including taxes, crackdown on corruption, reform and privatization and prospects for peace with Muslim separatists. With reports by Miriam Bunyi

Guess who's coming to GMA dinner at Forbes Park

From page A8

duty to close loss section but government is troubleseeing the fiscal crisis.

Senator Pimentel said the companies said Malacañang told them the President wanted (the firm to send "somebody who could decide for the company on the spot."

The President has gone directly to the decision makers in the tobacco and alcohol industries to secure a debut in the passage of the excise bill.

Credit rating agencies had warned that a credit downgrade was inevitable if Congress failed to pass new tax measures, specifically the one on tax products before the end of the year. A lower credit rating would make government borrowings more expensive and interest payments more prohibitive.

Based on ongoing deliberations in the House of Representatives, taxes on cigarettes and alcohol products would be raised by 20 percent in the first year and three percent in the second and third years, with the subsequent increases to be based on the inflation rate in the preceding two years.

The plan has little to meet to contract the 1997 tax reform bill that kept tax rates for cigarettes and alcohol static while prices have been rising.

The 20-1/2 bailouts it expected to generate P24.6 billion in new revenues—P7.6 billion in the first year, P8.96 billion in the second, and P8 billion in the third.

Cigarette manufacturers, which will contribute more than 50 percent of the tax rates, are strongly divided over the proposed changes in the tax on their products.

Philip Morris has advocated a flat P1 hike on cigarettes while its rival, Fortune Tobacco, has pushed for a percentage increase because its products are mostly generic-brand low-end cheapies.

Rep. Anna Bernardo-Carpio said pushing for a move to the ad valorem system, which San Miguel is opposing, but all three have declared publicly that they will support government revenue-raising measures.

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GMA vows to curb population rate

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday pledged to curb the runaway population growth rate, saying its rapid 2.3 percent pace was a "pressing issue."

"We intend to bring down the rate of population growth in 10 percent," she told reporters.

The President said the annual 2.3 percent birth rate was "a pressing issue" but it was not the country's main challenge.

"The most pressing issue that we have now is our inability to finance our own development by our own resources," she said.

Mr. Arroyo said the government was preaching "responsible parenthood" in a mainly Roman Catholic nation in which the dominant church opposes the use of artificial contraceptives.

Women and families had been advised to space their children two to three years apart and to use birth control methods that were not contrary to their religious beliefs, such as the rhythm method.

Mr. Arroyo said the family planning program was not the main responsibility of the national government, but rather the local government units which had been given the authority to decide "the methods that they will push in their communities."

Major Philippine business leaders last week wrote the President, calling on her to lead the nation in fighting for population control.

Mr. Arroyo, a devout Catholic, had previously refused to endorse artificial contraceptives. AFP

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quirico

Zarqawi claims killing of 49 unarmed Iraqi Army recruits

BAGHDAD—Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's terrorist network claimed responsibility Monday for the killing of nearly 50 unarmed army recruits by a rebel-thwarted assault on fledgling security forces cleared to take part in a crucial election in January.

Insurgents blew up a roadside bomb near a US patrol in central Baghdad on Monday, wounding three Iraqi civilians, the Interior Ministry said. The US military had no immediate word on the blast that went off not far from the Australian Embassy.

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Zarqawi's group has claimed responsibility for some of Iraq's bloodiest suicide attacks and several hostage beheadings.

Washington has offered $25 million for his killing or capture.

Authorities said rebels disguised as police had lulled the recruits into carrying the weapons at a false checkpoint. They forced them to lie face down on the road before shooting them in the head.

A dozen recruits tried to flee but were also killed.

"It appears they were unleashed by a large, well-organized force with good intelligence," a security source said.

Rebels and outside fighters have often targeted Iraqis seen as cooperating with the American or the interim government.

Another militant group, the Army of Imam al-Basha, said it had assassinated the police chief in the southern city of Arbil and threatened to kill Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani.

The group said in an Internet statement that it had killed Col. Sa'ib Ahmed on Saturday as a message to Barzani that "his hands of the mujahideen would soon reach him."

An Interior Ministry spokesperson described the victim of the attack as the "chief of guards" in Arbil, not the police chief.

Reuters

MOURNERS of the Iraqi National Guard recruits the bodies of killed army recruits close to the city of Baquba, 60 km northeast of Baghdad Oct. 26. The victims had been returning home to the southern Shiite-dominated cities of Amara and Kut after a 26-day training course at a desert camp near the Iranian border when they were captured. AFP

will take tough measures against them. Even willing aides we assure them, they will receive capital punishment," he said.

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Reuters

Karzai gets majority in Afghan poll count

KABUL—The boss of the Afghan presidential election turned Monday to an immense reckoning as candidates' compilation, a day of no preliminary results showed Hamid Karzai had won the vote in a landslide.

With 99.2 percent of the ballots counted, aides to the urbane 46-year-old Pashtun tribal chief and interim Afghan president said he had secured more than half the total number of votes and would thus avoid a second-round run-off.

As soon as Karzai's tally passed the 4.8 million ballots cast of an estimated eight million cast, on Tuesday afternoon, his campaign spokesperson chanted: Hey told AFP: "We have a simple majority. This is exactly what we wanted." Karzai's chief rival, Yunus Qanooni, was also swift to acknowledge Karzai's majority as he languished nearly 40 percentage points behind in second place on 16.1 percent. Karzai was on 55.3 percent.

"In order to respect the will of the voters, based on the numbers announced up to now, we concede to Karzai the winner," Qanooni's spokesperson, Saeed Hamid Jalili, told AFP.

The UN-Afghan electoral commission has not yet declared Karzai the winner, saying an announcement must wait for all votes to be counted and/or investigated to be analysed into allegations of fraud and irregularities.

The United Nations' established a panel of three international election experts that is investigating more than 100 complaints from all 15 candidates.

As part of its investigations, the panel ordered an unspecified number of ballot boxes to be isolated while inquiries were conducted.

AFP

Russia's richest man nearly 1 year in jail

MOSCOW—One year after Mikhail Khodorkovsky's arrest at gunpoint on a Siberian airport runway, the politically charged face-off between authorities, Russia's richest man and Yukos has left the country No. 1 oil company a hard's breadth from dissolution.

In arguably the biggest trial in Russia's post-communist history, bankers on as a cramped Moscow courtroom, the public fallout — all have finished with — is almost negative Many expect the proceedings as a boon-style show trial and Khodorkovsky's lawyers say they have little doubt he'll be convicted of the tax and fraud charges against him.

The fate of Yukos, which supplies 2 percent of the world's oil, appears equally dire. Its major production subsidiary is expected to be sold off by the state next month to meet some of Yukos' more than $7 billion bill for back taxes. Yukos is likely to lose further tax claims as well, possibly setting the stage for a forced sell-off of other pieces of the company.

"People are starting to realize that Yukos will cease to exist as a company" said Peter Elenkin, head of trading at investment bank Brunswick UBS in Moscow.

And quite widely see the success against Yukos and the separate tax and fraud charges on which Khodorkovsky is jailed as a form of politically motivated retribution for the tycoon's political rival and possible bid for funding opposition parties.

Those days, the state once vanished and the wealthiest and most connected of Russia's business titans spends his days hunched in a courtroom cage and brought to a jail cell.

Although Khodorkovsky had become the darling of Western portfolio investors for his efforts to introduce transparent corporate governance, he built his empire as a master of Russia's murky and often violent business world of the early 1990s. One deal from that period is the one for which Khodorkovsky and partner Platon Lebedev are on trial.

In 1994, the state auctioned off a 20 percent stake in Apatit, which makes a fertilizer component. The day after the auction, the top three bidders declined to close the deal and the shares were in the hands of a company representing Khodorkovsky's bank Menatep — which paid the nominal price of US$309,000, the Inquirer. The bid had been for US$1 billion.

AP

HONGGE TO HO

Vietnam's National Assembly delegates walk through Ba Dinh Square after paying their respects at the mausoleum of former Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh prior to the opening session of the National Assembly meeting in Hanoi, Oct. 11.

6 Pitcairn Island men found guilty of rape, assaults

ADAMSTOWN—Six of the seven Pitcairn Island men charged with raping and indecently assaulting girls as young as 11 were found guilty by a British court on the remote South Pacific Island, a first-ever official sex-crime trial.

The men, descendants of 18th-century Bounty mutineers, had argued their under-age sex was a tradition dating back to 1790 when mutineers arrived on the island with their Tahitian women.

But three victims, now adults who testified via video from New Zealand, said they were treated as "sex things" as girls and raped at will under Tahitian laws or in parlor chats on Pitcairn.

"The convictions today send a clear message that the abuse of children is not acceptable in any culture anywhere, even on Pitcairn Island," British police officer Ian Nixon said in a TV New Zealand report from the remote island.

The men will be sentenced later this week but will not be sent to jail until 2005 as the maximum amount of legal wrangling over whether British law jurisdiction over the island.

"All of the seven have been found guilty" said British High Commissioner spokesman Bruce Nicolson in Wellington, New Zealand.

Steve Christian, the mayor, has been found guilty of five rapes and a number of sexual assaults," Nicolson told Reuters.

Christian, 53, is a descendant of Fletcher Christian, who led the famous mutiny in 1790s. Christian was the "leader of the pack" on the island and believed he had a right to have sex with young girls, the prosecution told the court during the trial.

His 30-year-old son Randy Christian was found guilty of four rapes and five indecent assaults, and 79 New Zealand.

Len Brown, 78, was found guilty of two rapes and his son Dave Brown was convicted of nine indecent assaults, it said.

Bonnie Christian, Steve Christian's cousin, was found guilty of one count of indecent assault charge and two sexual assaults and Terry Young was convicted of one rape and six indecent assaults. Reuters

It's good to be president: Bush exploiting 'equity of incumbent'

BUSH AFP

By CONNIE CASS

WASHINGTON—No presidency chasing reelection runs sleep.

His Cabinet secretaries fan out across swing states, boosting morale for local schools or businesses aided. White House staffers move to key constituencies. A platoon of lobbyists—employees, campaign accomplishments, large and small.

The crowd varies customary of the campaign, a push of the office—not like the Oval trips on Air Force One...as long as there is a reason of official business.

If President George W. Bush's reelection bid differs from recent predecessors, it's a matter of degree. Seems very Bush has elevated the routine milking of governmental resources to new levels.

"We're just before at it," said Paul Light, professor of public service at New York University. "Bush has a tendency of this participants that no previous president had, and he does it to excess."

Not surprisingly Democrats groans about the thousands of laboratories Bush Cabinet members have logged visiting political battlegrounds. While they travel, they prohibited unofficially John Ashcroft talks, "Who's minding the store?"

Vice President Dick Cheney had similar complaints in 2000, when the shoe was on the other foot. As Bush's running mate, Democrats expressed outrage that their Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers had "jumped right in with both feet in the political arena" with comments supportive of Democratic nominee Al Gore.

Cheney noted that Treasury secretaries—like the leaders of the State, Defense and Justice departments—traditionally stay totally above the election fray.

That was then.

Nowadays, Cheney isn't complaining about Treasury Secretary John Snow's frequent flights, almost exclusively to Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida and other states key to this year's presidential race.

Last week, Snow visited Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and Tampa and Orlando, Florida, "to discuss the president's efforts to strengthen the economy and create jobs," according to his office. Snow says he's doing his job, not campaigning.

There are risks to traveling presidential surrogates onto the field. Transition Day Florida. In Ohio, Snow declared in a "myth" that the money his tour jobs under Bush, and John Kerry pounced on the comment as evidence the administration was out of touch.

The Kerry camp is also criticizing Condoleezza Rice, Bush's national security adviser, for a Bush-days spate of speeches in battleground states. Delegates Bermuda, who was indicted recently adviser to President Carter, called Rice's speeches "executive politicization of an office which is supposedly sensitive."

The White House said Rice was performing her duty of explaining the administration's new policies.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge says his department doesn't "do politics." But now the past seven months, nearly three-fifths of his public events have been the Washington area were in the 17 states considered the most hotly contested.

AP

Chinese seen reaching 1.5 billion in 30 years

SHANGHAI, China—China's population, now the world's largest at 1.3 billion, will peak at around 1.5 billion in about 30 years, the country's head of population planning was quoted on Monday as saying.

"The nation's population will still increase by about 10 million annually and reach a peak of 1.46 billion in the mid-2030s," the state-run newspaper Shanghai Daily newspaper quoted Zhang Weiqing as saying.

The expanding working-age population will put massive pressure on the economy to create jobs, while the aging population desires government resources such as health care, Zhang was quoted as saying.

Both the working-and-aged populations are expected to peak in about 30 years, he said, adding that "the peaks are the toughest challenges for China's sustainable development."

China imposed a policy of allowing one child per family since 20 years ago, following a post-World War II baby boom. Chinese experts say it has reduced overall population growth by about 300 million births over the past decade.

People age 60 and over now make up 11 percent of the total populations, and officials say the proportion is set to surge.

The government recently began allowing more families to have second children in hopes of easing the future burden of fewer workers supporting a growing number of retirees.

The Shanghai Daily said Zhang spoke at an international symposium on population issues over the weekend in Shanghai. Staff in the Population Commission's press office said a copy of the text wasn't immediately available.

The newspaper said Shanghai will likely add up to 4 million to its current population of 16 million by around 2020. Though that will strain resources, the city could handle a population of up to 30 million, it cited researchers at Shanghai's Fudan University as saying.

Experts attending the symposium confirmed concern over China's rising disparity between births of boys and girls.

Birth limits coupled with a traditional preference for male heirs has led families to use modern technology such as ultrasound machines to determine babies' genders before they are born. Unwanted girls are often aborted.

Nationwide, 117 boys are born for every 100 girls. The ratio in some rural areas is as high as 130 boys to 100 girls.

Worldwide, fewer than 110 boys are born to every 100 girls.

If current trends continue, officials say China could have as many as 40 million men who can't find spouses by 2020.

India currently has the world's second largest population with just over 1 billion people, but is expected to overtake China by 2050, when India will have over 1.6 billion people.

The United States is expected to have about 420 million people by that year, from about 300 million now. AP

Decongesting Seoul: President seeks options

SEOUL—South Korea will resolve to find a way to ease congestion in Seoul and develop the regions but the government will not challenge a Constitutional Court's ruling on moving the capital, President Roh Moo-hyun said on Monday.

The court ruled on Thursday a 2003 parliamentary law on relocating the capital to the south of Seoul was unfamiliar, and a constitutional amendment on administrative would be needed before such a plan could go ahead.

In a speech read to parliament by Prime Minister Lee Hae-chan, Roh said no one would challenge the court's opinion but allowing the power concentrated in the Seoul region remained a key national problem that had to be solved.

"The government wants to be clear that regional power sharing, balanced development and easing the concentration in the capital region is a historic challenge for the future of the country," he said.

"We can, not even the Constitutional Court will deny this challenge," he added.

Roh had made relocating the administrative capital away from crowded Seoul to two rural counties in the central region of Asia's third-largest economy a key pledge in his 2002 election campaign.

He had argued the move would allow balanced development in the country where more than 10 million of its 48 million people live in the capital.

In Roh's first reaction to Thursday's ruling, he appeared to dilute a full-fledged acceptance of the court ruling, saying instead: "We can still drop the legal effectiveness of the conclusion."

"There is an air of not accepting the Constitutional Court's decision," GNP spokesperson Yim Tae-hee said in statement.

Roh sought to reduce discontent in the region where the new capital would have been built by saying the government would seek measures a plan to promote development in the area.

The two-year committee in Chungcheong province picked earlier this year to be the new seat of government had been ruling out to take place driven by representatives of huge development said to the government plan to build a city of 500,000 people.

Many of the region's residents have been protesting the court's ruling, saying their livelihood is now in danger.

Opponents said Roh's plan was ill thought out and lacked a consensus. They said moving the capital south would send the wrong signal to North Korea because it would be taken to mean the South did not regard reunification soon. Reuters

Deadly temblor stokes Tokyo fears of 'Big One'

By Elaine Lies

TOKYO—The deadliest earthquake to hit Japan in a decade is a grim reminder to the 12 million residents of Tokyo that a killer quake could hit the capital at any time.

And experts said on Monday that even though confidence for the "Big One" had improved in recent years, much needed to be done.

Buildings shook and swayed in Tokyo on Saturday and following days when a 6.8-magnitude quake and hundreds of aftershocks hit the Niigata area, 250 km to the north.

At least 20 people in Niigata region were killed and 1,300 injured in the powerful series of tremors.

Niigata, however, is largely rural. A similar magnitude quake in Tokyo, one of the world's leading financial centers, would kill thousands and send shockwaves through world markets.

Saturday's quake was the deadliest in Japan since 1995 when a 7.2-magnitude tremor killed more than 6,000 in the city of Kobe.

As bad as that was, Tokyo's Great Kanto earthquake of 1923 killed 20 times as many people—more than 140,000.

"If a quake like the one in Niigata hit Tokyo, the damage would be terrible," said Yasuno Kuroyama, president of the non-profit National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention in Tokyo.

"The death toll would be like that of Kobe," he said.

Experts have long said that another big quake is overdue.

In August, a government earthquake panel said there was a 70 percent chance that a quake of around magnitude 7.0 would hit Tokyo in the next 30 years, although it said the risk of a Great Kanto-type quake was 0.8 percent or lower.

The Tokyo city government has said an earthquake of magnitude 7.2 could kill more than 7,000 people and injure closer to 150,000, while destroying or heavily damaging more than 340,000 buildings.

The Niigata quake showed that government preparations have improved, experts said, though much still remains to be done.

"Both local officials and the military were able to be on the scene much earlier, and this really helped," said Takehiko Yamamura, head of the private Disaster Prevention System Institute. "It wasn't perfect, but definitely much better."

Collapsing homes killed several people in Niigata, and experts said much of the damage to Tokyo would also center on traditional wooden houses and the likely ensuing gas fed fires.

"The worst scenario is if a quake hit after midnight, while people are asleep in their homes," Kuroyama said. "The buildings would collapse and their fires would sweep through."

Despite the potential for disaster, there has been no official code prevention measures.

A 1997 report by the city government showed that Tokyo had over 1.6 million houses built before 1981.

Reuters

LOCAL residents look up at a tilted house on the slope at Nigata-ken town, a village in Nagaoka hit by a landslide after a powerful earthquake. AFP/File

Iran: Nuke conversion plant nearly finished

TEHRAN—A key uranium nuclear facility which the US's nuclear watchdog has urged Tehran to close down is nearing completion, a senior Iranian nuclear official said on Sunday.

The Uranium Conversion Facility in the central city of Isfahan is part of nuclear fuel cycle activities which the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has given Tehran until late November to suspend.

If it does not it faces being sent to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

Washington says Iran's efforts to produce its own nuclear fuel are part of a covert bid to produce nuclear arms. Iran says it wants the fuel for nuclear reactors that generate electricity.

"Right now, the Isfahan UCF facility is 75 percent operational," said Mohammad Ghannadi, deputy head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization.

"I can say that 21 out of the 24 workshops in that facility have become operational," he added in a speech at the plant to visiting journalists, extracts of which were broadcast on state television.

The Isfahan plant is designed to convert uranium ore, or yellowcake, into uranium hexafluoride. This in turn can be spun in centrifuges to produce enriched uranium.

Moderately enriched uranium can be used to fuel nuclear power reactors. But uranium can also be enriched further to make bomb-grade material.

Iran has announced plans to convert 37 tons of yellowcake at Isfahan...enough to produce uranium for five atomic warheads according to nuclear experts.

But diplomats close to the IAEA say Iran has so far produced only a few kilograms of uranium hexafluoride in experimental tests at Isfahan.

Reuters

Delayed Darfur peace talks set to start in Nigeria

ABUJA—Sudan's government and two rebel groups fighting in Darfur meet a fresh round of peace talks on Monday to try to end a conflict that has sparked international outcry and triggered one of the world's humanitarian crises.

The talks, initially meant to start last Thursday were delayed because of a transport mix-up, which meant that many rebel delegates only arrived in Abuja at the weekend.

Previous peace negotiations in Nigeria's capital dragged on for three weeks only to collapse without agreement, but international mediators say they hope this time will be different.

"My impression is that the time people are more willing to discuss," said Jan Pronk, the UN secretary general's special representative in Sudan.

The two rebel groups launched a revolt in western Sudan in early 2003 after years of skirmishes between mainly African farmers and Arab nomads over land. They accuse the government of arming Arab militias, known as Janjaweed, to crush them and their civilian supporters, a charge Khartoum denies.

The conflict has driven 1.1 million people from their homes and the United Nations estimates 70,000 people have died from malnutrition and disease in the last seven months alone.

The United States has called the campaign of killing, raping and looting unleashed by the Janjaweed militias genocide, and while resolution has threatened to impose sanctions on Khartoum if it does not stop the violence and disarm the militias.

Both the rebels and the government say they are committed to the talks, which are sponsored by the African Union (AU), but mistrust between the two sides runs as deep as ever.

"We are interested in finding a just and sustainable peace. We are here for that purpose," said Sharif Harir, the chief negotiator for the main rebel movement, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA).

"But we have to look at what that (the government) have to offer. My personal impression is that they are not serious," he said.

Sudanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Najeeb al-Deen Abdul Wahab said his government was open to "whatever can bring a solution" but said the rebels also have to agree to put their fighters in containment sites and lay down their weapons.

Reuters

Girl latest Thai victim of bird flu

BANGKOK—A 14-year-old girl was confirmed Monday as being the 12th person in Thailand to die this year from bird flu, the country's health ministry said.

Tests results confirmed that the girl from the northern province of Sukhothai, who died six days ago, had the deadly H5N1 strain of the virus.

"She was on the list of suspected cases after she died after being sick for 11 days," said Chaisit Viravaidhaya, the director of Thailand's bird flu center. "The lab test result found she had H5N1."

At least 19 people have also died of the disease in Vietnam since December last year and millions of birds have died or been culled across that.

Six Asian nations have reported a resurgence of the virus amid fears that the disease has become endemic in the region.

Five people have been confirmed as having bird flu in Thailand since the second wave of outbreaks, with four of them having died.

An 11-year-old girl, who was ordered before full tests were carried out, is also listed as a "probable" case and is suspected of passing the disease on to her mother who cared for her in hospital, the also died.

Thai Premier Thaksin Shinawatra announced a "test" on bird flu for October and told officials that he wanted the country cleared of the disease by the end of the month.

The bird flu was identified in 11 of Thailand's 76 provinces from Oct. 1 to 22, more than at the start of the month, according to a statement from the bird flu center. AFP

8 Palestinians killed in Israeli missile strikes

GAZA CITY—Eight Palestinians including two security service members were killed in a major Israeli incursion in the northern Gaza Strip overnight, Palestinian security sources and hospital officials said Monday.

The fighting erupted hours before the start of a crucial parliamentary debate on Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, ahead of a vote on Tuesday.

Police have deployed outside the Knesset ahead of expected demonstrations by settlers against the plan, under which all 8,000 Jewish residents of the Gaza Strip would be evacuated, as well as several fortified settlers from four enclaves in the northern West Bank, by the end of 2005.

In the Gaza Strip, eight Palestinians were killed and 20 wounded, including civilians, when the Israeli army fired at least four air-to-ground missiles at a national security service position in the Khan Yunis area, security officials said.

One civilian was gunned down in communal weapons fire, they said. AFP

INQUIRER

OPINION

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Fixed term

EDITORIAL

AST week President Arroyo announced the appointments of Lt. Gen. Efren Abu, the commander of the troops that quelled the Oakwood mutiny last year, as the successor of Gen. Narciso Abaya as Armed Forces chief of staff. Abaya will retire on Friday when he reaches the mandatory retirement age of 56.

Abaya is reported to be in a hurry to leave an Armed Forces whose reputation is already in tatters because of the corruption case involving Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, suspended AFP comptroller. Abu must be having mixed emotions, because while promotion to AFP chief of staff is a great honor, he probably would prefer to have been elevated to the post under more auspicious circumstances.

Abu is not going to stay long in the AFP chief's post; he will retire on June 24 next year, or just about eight months from now. We hope Abu's appointment will not mark the start of another round of "musical chairs" involving the highest post in the military.

During President Macapagal-Arroyo's first term, the one where she served out the unexpired tenure of deposed President Joseph Estrada, she appointed six AFP chiefs of staff. They were Generals Diomedio Villanueva (14 months), Roy Cimatu (less than four months), Benjamin Defensor (the shortest term at 66 days although technically he was supposed to serve only 48 hours), Dionisio Santiago (less than five months) and Narciso Abaya (more than 18 months).

This game of musical chairs may have been politically justifiable then because she had to insure the loyalty of the generals who had a big role in ousting Estrada. But then, as it is now, the practice of appointing AFP chiefs for very short periods is not logically justifiable. It may even give rise to periods of political instability instead of promoting political security. The AFP chief's post is not supposed to be used like a lollipop to be dangled and given to certain generals to keep them contented and pacified.

We believe that the generals would like to be treated like professional soldiers who will abide by the decision of their commander in chief no all matters, including the appointments of the AFP chief of staff. Security, of course, is a big factor in appointments but it is not the only factor. There have been instances when a president practiced what is called "deep selection," appointing a junior general over the heads of senior ones. That is part of the prerogatives of a commander in chief.

The Constitution says that the tour of duty of the AFP chief of staff shall not exceed three years. In times of war or other national emergency declared by Congress, the president may extend his tour of duty. But what we have seen during the first term of Ms Arroyo, and what we're seeing now, is that the AFP chiefs of staff have been serving short terms.

A short term for the AFP chief of staff is not conducive to long-term planning for the Armed Forces. It does not promote continuity of programs and policies. And ultimately, it is inspiration for the country, for the AFP chief of staff has to be given the retirement pay of a four-star general when he retires. If an AFP chief of staff serves not the full three-year term, the government pays the retirement pay of only one general in three years, instead of three or four if that many generals are made AFP chief during the same period of time.

To repeat, the game of musical chairs may have made political sense during the President's first term when she had to think of insurance against coups and other disturbances from a restive military. But now that she has won an electoral mandate, there is no longer any need to insure the loyalty of the military—or is there? The President can now appoint an AFP chief who will enjoy a three-year tour of duty instead of one who will most be saying his goodbyes three by after he has entered his term.

Congress ought to seriously consider a proposal made by a legislator to fix the term of the AFP chief of staff at three years. This could be done by legislation and may not need a constitutional amendment since the Constitution says that the AFP chief's tour of duty "shall not exceed three years." Then the President would not feel bound by politics or feelings of gratitude to appoint generals who will retire in a few months to the top military post. Then she can choose the most qualified among them so that he can carry out reforms within a longer period and promote stability to an institution that has been intermittently experiencing instability since Edsa I.

'Mom killers' and convents

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"Get that to a nursery. Go!" — Hamlet

WITHOUT fanfare, 300 Catholic nuns in 11 convents worked with international researchers, led by a Filipino scientist, in experiments having over four years to produce zinc-rice variety that could curb the region's "mind mute killer": iron deficiency anemia.

After a meeting over 11,000 rosaries, white veils, three-hundred Hail-Mary's, the Asian Development Bank knew soon. It has "approximately four to five times more men ... than most countries currently examined for the Philippines."

"The new experimental rice variety fed high in both iron and zinc," adds Chemical Weekly. "Both are normally deficient in a rice-rich diet."

About 6 out of every 10 pregnant women in Asia, and 40 percent of schoolchildren, are iron-deficient. This reduces their immunity to disease, enraging their physical and mental capabilities.

"In the Philippines, more than 35 percent of women, aged between 15 and 49, are iron deficient," the United Nations Children Fund warns. "More than 500 women die during pregnancy and childbirth each year."

Commercial canneries already were stenciling tuna, bangus and other fish with iron and other essential micro-nutrients. They knew vast numbers were likewise vulnerable.

For years, ways to curb this "serial mass killer" eluded scientists. Iron tablets proved costly and required complex import systems. What if there was a cheap recipe for the poor across Asia, was naturally bred and selected for high iron content?" mused ADB health specialist Lois Stoddard.

The search for micronutrient rich rice brought together, in the mid-1990s, scientists from the International Rice Research Institute, University of the Philippines, International Food Policy Research Institute, Cornell and Adelaide Universities.

Without notice, an iron-packed strain emerged in the late 1990s from an experiment for something else: rice able to thrive in degraded soils and mild.

Then researchers validate parallel Cornell and Los Baños tests that strains rich in Hi-65 remained after processing and eating. Both experiments were positive for absorption of the micro-nutrient elements.

In others cities, this experiment go from here, after the nuns have left, just as quickly as when they began! Its implications ripple far beyond Los Baños fields and Manila convents. In India, severe iron deficiency causes the deaths of 50,000 pregnant women. In Afghanistan, 65 percent of children under five are anemic.

"The next step is to conduct trials in a nonnuns setting and look at the effect on children's test scores," ADB health specialist Lois Stoddard writes. "A study is planned for Bangladesh in 2004-2005."

Hi-65 seeds were developed "using traditional crossbreeding," IRRI's director general, Dr. Ronald P. Cantrell, said. "No biotechnology was involved."

Seed grown in Los Baños are being shipped to research organizations in various countries for adaptability testing. The painstaking process of crossbreeding is ongoing. Crossbreeding could breed into the new plant pest and disease resistance and hardiness for local conditions.

The Manila International Development Agency, US Agency for International Development, and Australian Center for International Agricultural Research are funding the project.

If there are no hitches, Hi-65, or to off-spring, could be released to farmers here and abroad in two or three years.

The new rice offers the prospect of decisively bringing to heel iron-deficiency anemia in the world's poorest regions.

"Despite the weight of scientific supervision, the effectiveness of the trial depended on the tireless help of the nuns themselves," IRRI notes. The "gloomy Saint's" counterfeit requiring to the donors may yet beat this "serial mass killer."

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Credibility

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

A RALLY by the Kilusang Magbukid ng Pilipinas was dispersed last week at Welcome Rotonda in Quezon City. The marchers had just come from the Department of Agriculture where they composed not for a couple of nights. After a dialogue with DA officials, they marched to Malacañang to send their lamentations to their President. Or since they knew that was going to fall on deaf ears, to assail the walls of the Palace with their shouts.

It was then that the police arrived, whom, be it or police or the marchers, but the rally was scattered. The marchers claimed it was violent, the police claimed they applied only the right amount of force. The latter were not in a good mood. One of their own, violent commander Manolo Lazarte, had just been gunned down a few days before by people they suspected to be the marchers' friends.

The marchers, on the other hand, did not particularly mind defying the authorities. It wasn't just that they were known to provide manhood to the pious their point. It was that they had a pressing point to press. Their point was hunger, the one that is already gripping many parts of the country today and the one that is bound to ravage the whole of it tomorrow, with the exception of the villages of Makati which are on food security or presidents' biggest headache to have enough to eat.

It is not clear who provided whom as the welcome formula for the rally to be dispersed. But that is not important. What is important is that it reminds us of a piss-earthy vehicle to the writing on which the scandal-ridden government today—yes, government and not just the AFP—is taking place. The disappearance of public monies is happening alongside the disappearance of food. The shimming of the bit of the land by a privileged few is happening while the seeming many go hungry. But it is consumable nuts.

I did say in a previous column that what was most worrisome about the growing problem of food security, or plain hunger, was that it was happening alongside displays of profligacy by government. That profligacy wasn't just to do with the GMA jet that is currently the subject of a Senate investigation. It was also to do with the helicopters that the First Lady has been using to go to the provinces. It was also to do with the Presidential Security Group's fleet of vehicles, which is periodically renewed. It was also to do with the luxurious lifestyles of the First Couple flaunted their own medical expenses for government officials to witness and save by bringing their entire family and friends, with the price tag, along to see China. They would justify that act as by saying they used their own money for it, which just shows new meanings to living within one's means. Their means are truly awesome. More than that, the penchant for misbehavior was to be seen in GMA's defense of the other Garcia, GSIS boss Winston, who was the object not of corruption charges, and her appointment of Roman Bautista to the PCIJ. If she had decided to advertise her abstinence more in the plight of her country, at the cost of her people, she could not have done a better job.

When I wrote that column, pointing to the dangers of a situation where more controlled with excess, where a person who does not have the hunger as in Marie Antoinette, the Carlos Garcia exposes hadn't happened yet. What had happened was that a few months earlier GMA lifted every kilometer of road from here to Kingdom come with pictures of herself, using public funds, familiar Pagcor and PCSO.

Apolline Pimentel speculates that the exposé on Garcia's ill-gotten wealth, which is just the tip of the iceberg, the submerged part being the wealth that used to be majorities, was leaked by the CIA after GMA fell from grace with George Bush. Well, I've heard the same speculation over the last few weeks, in light particularly of the Garcia exposé taking place alongside the Heritage Foundation's assessment of GMA as the weakest leader in Asia. Maybe it's coincidence, maybe George W's government is doing a number on her. But whether one or the other, it was just an exposé waiting to happen. It was merely a matter of when one was going to be exposed first, the military or the civilian bureaucracy. Whatever was pointing to the closeness of the civilian below Carlos mirrored it in the direction of the military.

But whether one or the other, whether it's the military or the civilian bureaucracy that finds it self to the firing line, all of government reaps the bitter harvest with all that. It is not merely because GMA is Garcia's commander in chief, or indeed because the pillage happened during the period GMA's "war against terror," though she has been repeating again and again. It is also that the GMA-regime has absolutely no credibility in prosecute the defendants.

Nothing demonstrates that more than that ignominious thirteen, Miller's unspeakable brother (at least he was the one left holding the bag behind "Jose Pidal" that has since dropped on his lap while fleeing the wrath of God) in one of those stunning bits he'll be famous for in the House. I wonder what he said when Garcia refused to answer his questions on the ground that he, Garcia, had a "right to silence." I wonder if the other congressmen could remember enough to howl in delight at the spectacle of the master invoking the right of the accused.

GMA would have Garcia court-martialed? The rest of the country would have her impeached. Every sort of pillage her minions commit not only tainted the world of the acts of pillage she and her husband have committed. How is Garcia's raid of the AFP budget worse a case—in the way different from GMA's raid of the national treasury to earn a loan or power? How is Garcia's ownership of various mansions and properties under various names any different from Jose Pidal's ownership of various mansions and properties under various names, not least the penthouse at the Atlanta Towers? Gentle Silby is not their strongest suit.

Meanwhile, the rabble is marching down the streets, the growling in their mouths drowned only by the growling in their stomachs.

Surrender to enemy within?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

OUTGOING AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya has proposed that the right of peaceful assembly, freedom and responsibility in the military—all of which have to do with limits—be counted seven to the civilian canon, while the military honour on operations. Doubtless, in proposing the expansion of Tomorrow, Abaya wishes to eliminate the opportunities that have created the big noise that has befallen the military following the shenanigans of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia and subsequent rise and rising implicated with him.

But the potential of functionalist Abaya's proposal will be a step-out, contrivable to the similar while is will not help the military to eliminate any of its functions, since the legislative process-wise Panel was born born pen and pastered the system with a number of functions. The solution is not to eliminate functions but to find good, honest and upright people to perform them. There must be such people who truly need to be motivated properly to do their jobs the best way they can. No one may want to help redeem the military's image.

* * *

Some weeks back, a group of artists and art students gathered at "Living Tolentoan," a monthly forum of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, to talk about the role of artists in the Philippine artist faces and why he or she is being left behind, or at least, is not on the same level as other leisure was tackled. It was pointed out that a number of outstanding Filipino artists have been honored internationally, like pianist Cecile Licad, tenor Osvaldo Gonzaga and singer Lea Salonga, but by and large, as writer Amadis Ma. Guerrero put it in an article, Filipino artists still lack a "formula" to make the international community sit up and take notice.

The forum's speakers, all noted artists, had their own theories about this elusive formula for success. Eugene Castillo, a Filipino-American from Sacramento, California who was recently appointed music director of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, opined that Filipino artists lack fire. Assemblyman Guerrero, Castillo quoted from Robert Frost, was home gone beyond their boundary to stop again—which is more difficult.

"Just as there's no such thing as a bad orchestra, only a bad conductor, there's no such thing as a bad artist, because his mind is molded by the good his teacher, his leader, inspires. But sometimes you have a wonderful conductor from the Philippines, who is able a measure to his own right, and look bad.

"What really is 'fire' to you? Is it the charge and intensity that a prophet transmits of performers which, to the untrained ear and eye, are perceived by ignorant, seem to compromise for the inadequacy of our senses, or the lack thereof? Or is it the inviting pat of enhancement that not be undone, discovered deep inside the souls of the poets, the essential flame never found in the souls of the rest of the world?

"The Filipino youth simply has to be disciplined and that 'fire' that you seek will burst naturally. And that—contrary to your audience's reaction—is the 'formula' that most Filipino artists and agents, is far, far placed, by Filipino artists like myself, causing misfortunes to sit up and take notice!

"In the Philippines, we take the Arts seriously enough to give them recognition for talent and then after all things good for any country are ignored by its government. We Filipino artists are fighting an uphill battle to preserve and propagate the identity of our nation through the arts. Even if you are an American citizen, Filipino blood runs through your veins. Be honest: you are Filipino and help us help other Filipinos—not be the kind who takes up the mentality that overreaches envy.

"Since you are employed by the institution established by Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, including those who have moved to other shores, as one Senator, I would like to read my sentiment by quoting Peter Pudon's Uncle Ben: 'With great power comes great responsibility.' And that especially applies to artists as well as to engineers and other professionals who may not realize that the wealth of those who consequently do have rights enough to hang themselves with."

Sidebar

B.T. for the woman's reasoning of the air conditioning issue, the silence would have been complete. Still every now and then, someone would be enough, or death for us, I have a slight cold, and my treasurer sniffling makes me roll our eyes. That is a place where noise is unwelcome. The clipboard sound is greeted by disapproving glances.

Around me, many are praising, but this is not a church. And although it is a

YOUNG BLOOD

Joel M. Ytac III

finding, I am not teaching in a classroom in De La Salle University, but today as soon as we emerged by our tape stations. In their place are 45 graduating students from the law schools who are taking the Bar may before becoming (they hope) members of the Philippine bar.

I am not one of them, and though I envy the fact that they are just a step away from becoming members of one of the noblest professions, I do not envy the task of preparation. I am not about to tell them what to do or not to do, but I assure that with determine whether their bar (or more) years future school and mistake of screaming will be rewarded with the much-coveted title of "Attorney".

My small role in this drama they call the bar exams is to make sure that the examinees do not look for unoriginal forms of inspiration—i.e., their surnames' notebooks—while answering a lawyer's questions. Even if they are fit to practice law. Helping me out are four other pairs of eyes—three other watchers, and our head watcher. This may sound like overkill, but it is a concern that must be put in place. Examinees who get caught cheating are forever barred from taking the test again. This makes planning more attractive than harmful. Thinking away one's chances of becoming a lawyer is the only reason I can think of that someone might have the answers to a question you can't figure out.

The Supreme Court's preparations and procedures for the bar may strike some people as bordering on paranoia. No example, in the age of computers, the examinees tasked to prepare the questions are required to do so manually. With as much as 10 tasks, however, one can't be too paranoid, as it would be a gross injustice to allow the undeserving to pass, using loose legal answers upon unsuspecting individuals. After all, the uniqueness of counsel can spell the difference between good ownership and the law thereof. Students and so-called real prison scenarios, life and death.

Thus before, during and after the exams, everything humanly possible is done to ensure that the only factor that determines an individual's capacity to be a lawyer is his or her knowledge of the law. But there are still so many more that we bookies do not have any markings aside from their surnames. Examinees and watchers are rotated every Sunday. After the morning exam, the examinees are rearranged for the afternoon. Personal conflicts of interest are avoided (for instance, I'm not going to watch my brother in the exams) are required to inform the bar coordinator if they have relatives taking the bar).

The bar exams are so rough that passing is considered a feat in itself. The exams are composed of essay-type questions that items very little room for guesswork. An examinee isn't only asked to answer general legal questions, but also to explain the reasons for all steps accordingly. There are 20 questions for every subject, five for subjects of information, law students need to memorize and practice on order to give an effective answers can be mind-boggling. Like 20 minutes time only 20 to 30 percent of those who take the exams pass. This means that among the 45 examinees in my room, only three or four will be taking their oaths as lawyers next year. (This explains why even the most brilliant law grads cry out their lungs for the exams, you can't ask questions of topping the bar, but after the fact, you just wish you passed the darn thing.)

Despite the odds, however, over 6,000 law graduates try their luck every year. Their backgrounds vary. There are those who have been in review classes for the last couple of months. Some, like my co-workers in the court, worked their way through law school. Others look like they're old enough to be my father. Or is the last group that I admire most, for those people given a new meaning to the word persistence. Be ages their greying hair, they have not given up their dream of becoming accomplishes. Better late than never, I suppose.

I've been there, people who cheer to have escaped law school, and have sure not one who said he relished the experience of taking the bar. So why does? Are they driven by some noble passion, a desire to right the wrongs of society, fight for the rights of the downtrodden and uphold the rule of law? Or are they in it for material gain, the lure of thousands of pesos in bonuses, billable hours and higher salaries?

When I was there, I told myself that I would aspire for those who have come from so far away to withdraw to fulfill their dream of becoming an officer of the court. Herewith, sensing the trials they have had to face—hours in the library balancing work, family and law school, feeding and a nonexistent social life—they have persevered, striving with them their hopes and that of their families, making the necessary sacrifices—I will be watching my business lawyers and improve their characteristic future flaws.

In a country where, as a general rule, one's prosperity is determined by one's ability to like me, rather than by hard work—and your success is influenced by who you know rather than what you know—it is comforting to know that there are still some things that you can get only through patience and hard work. Whether you're a corporate lawyer (e.g. education, bar), good (volunteering), I am secure in the knowledge that the bar is an exclusive club that does not accept individuals on the basis of their family names, good looks or bank accounts.

Into all of those who suffered for the four Sundays of the bar exams will be able to face the legal profession now, public interest lawyers who have taken the bar will be back again now September in the same classes, air-conditioned rooms of De La Salle. Most will still have the same look of desperation. Perhaps, having gone through the exercise this year, they will be more confident, better prepared. But one thing's certain: they will continue to recite the same client prayers. And I will hope that their prayers will be answered. Such, or that they continue to receive the threats that has gotten them this far.

2nd M. Ytac III, 20, works in the Supreme Court.

Misplaced priorities

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IF THE President will needs proof that she exists and perhaps the members of the Senate and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) don't have enough work on their hands, perhaps she should ask those sexy guys all the cursors in the media, but especially of TV Maria Consuelo Laguardia, the MTRCB chair, just in to set us into a state of palpitations that TV hosts Cristy Fermin and Regine Velasquez were wearing "sexy" outfits on the prime-time variety shows they host.

By any yardstick, neither Dolfin nor Velasquez can be called "bold" or even "enticing" anymore. Fermin's outfit was "bold" only in the sense that it was "new" in that they are considered serious actresses and very then, as seldom seen to wear tunics or jumpsuits.

Velasquez's outfits—always apparently were offensive to be seen by the women seen on the TV shows they host, which both promote the price of fame and fortune to be by adopting shapely bodies and "revealing" outfits. Velasquez's outfit—"revealing" in that they are considered serious actresses and very then, as seldom seen to wear tunics or jumpsuits.

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tard in channeling the presence of the fallen women while underlining her songs' sexual content by suggestive gestures. So it's still possible for a singer to be rewarded from wardrobe technicians and still be sexually attractive to her or gender audience. Velasquez and Fermin, with real sensitivity, should have chosen those!

The MTRCB chair's concern over tacky outfits may be amusing, but it's not so funny when compared to the other excesses we see on TV or movie screens. Friends have been in quite a rage to write something about the propensity of TV and radio superstars to subject their young children victimized by sexual abusers in a grilling inclusive of the camera.

Of course, they also care to remind the identity of the young victims, shielding them from the back or focusing on their hands or feet. But does the child know this? And isn't the very act of interviewing, of being asked questions about such a horrible experience, itself the throes of fear or sufficient sensitive, doubly traumatic to the child?

What purpose does it serve to subject a child to such an ordeal? Some time ago, I have seen, the reporter/interviewer is often not even interested in information but how the child feels and what he/she wants to happen to his/her abuser, who may be a parent.

I'm glad that Secretary Ordoñez Secretary Ermita [illegible] **but now it's** [illegible] **and wanted reporters that the purpose of a story is not to cause** [illegible] **but for framing a child who has already gone through so much suffering.**

* * *

A FRIEND of mine was on her way home from San Francisco on the day a military plane [illegible] the Iloilo runway, necessitating the diversion of their PAL flight to Cebu. My friend said she understood that it was unfortunate, but she feels that she could have done so much more to make a great inconvenience much less harrowing for their passengers.

At the first place, she complained, the only reason she and her three grandchildren had [illegible] Iloilo's obligation to flying PAL was that it was the only airline that would be making a "non-stop flight" from San Francisco to Manila. "My friends in the States would be much better for him," she said. But when they arrived at the check-in counter, they found to their chagrin that, without any explanation, PAL had changed the route to include a stop over in Honolulu.

Then, after circling Iloilo several times, the pilot finally announced that they would be diverted to Cebu, due to the accident at the runway. In Cebu, my friend said, PAL did not immediately [illegible] the hapless dazed passengers to the lounge but left the rest of them in hostile darkness.

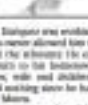
"None of the public phones were working," my friend complained, "and there were no officials to reach for aid." They were not even allowed to use the phones in the lounge, and when we spent emergency calls to inform me in my friend's behalf, he was roundly scolded, finally my friend was able to get her [illegible] to [illegible] by borrowing the cell phone of a clandestine immigration officer.

Hours after arriving in Cebu, the PAL crew finally paid attention to the recently-dazed passengers, offering [illegible] and bottled water. But others, when passengers [illegible] the announcement made that they would [illegible] Iloilo, the crew immediately began passing away the sandwiches, to the annoyance of passengers who had yet received their [illegible] food.

"I understand it was an emergency," said my friend, "but the crew could have done so much more to help us, their customers."

How much do you want to see this airline [illegible] by flying PAL again? Or that any relative or friend they flight would want to risk the inconvenience again?

Declarations of five captives



SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Ruvikki L. Harper

DECRACES from the declarations of the five captives from just who sought shelter in the township Cites on April 19, 1904. In the typical of the instinct of foreign affairs, Governor-General Biggs who had been sent as a representative Spanish monarch's overseas domain stated that the captives had been turned over to them as a parcels of good will. It was well known at the time that Jolo was the prime market for slaves in the archipelago and therefore the new and dangerous [illegible] of piracy. Many captives from Sangay, Iloilo, Mindanao and other points arrived in Jolo frequently. But the Governor reported that the status considered [illegible] a privilege of equal rights for Spanish monarchs, even if he had no pay rebuke, and was therefore superior to the governor general. He also noted the care that the sultan and his advisers carefully cultivated to maintain themselves as a semi-independent state.

The first, named Francisco Enriquez, like his companions, was a native of Ilaet in the province of Camarines Norte, 35 years of age. With seven others he was captured in the area of Agusa Isle and brought to Tawi-Tawi and from there to Jolo by his own party. Dato Pala, whom he cultivated the acid and performed other chores. The Muslim were unable to force him to deny the Christian faith despite the circumstances and the considerable pressure exerted on him. Captives were instructed to learn new trades under threat of torture and started off as a Moro. The five complained of mistreatment and the scarcity and bad food they were given.

Upon the appearance and one of any foreign vessel, the owners of the captives would take great care to keep away and hide their slaves. It was deemed unsafe to merely keep an eye on them, since presumably unconscious advances on the they would be sent since their was of ways to disguise that they might escape.

After five years her master had her marry Lorenzo who was in the same household. Their host consisted of cassava, a rice crop and fruit that they were allowed to keep for themselves. They worked in the house as well as in the fields cultivating rice and while being supervised by Moros who were in charge of the captives that they called *anjos*. They did not, however, force her to renounce her religion. The Governor in charge of them never in the habit of making their slaves drink—their abstinence, but as did have she had not been detained.

Maria desired to return to her hometown where she was married and had two sons, the children of whom she had been separated from. Lorenzo did not want to go, but he was afraid of their own safety. Their fear, she had not had any news of her family. Both regard to the inconvenience of her new husband, she manifested to him. If her first husband were alive, she would prefer to live with some one with he has she was deemed to remain with Lorenzo.

Francisco San Miguel was the fourth captive presented. He was from Kulita, Cuyo, a seaport about small southeast of the interior mouth of the Bay of Ilo Ilo. He was 30 years of age, and by profession, 30 years of age, and [illegible] Cuyo for eight years. He was captured on the island in a boat of the governor of Cuyo together with the wife and two children. They separated him from his family and he had not heard of them since. He was [illegible] that they were slaves of a datu of the Island of Sulus. He wanted to return to his town where he still had relatives.

The last was called Bernardo Rubiadeza from Leyte, a laborer and 20 years of age. Thirteen years ago a party he was on [illegible] Samar with two companions to trade in tobacco when they were captured by Moros in a vinta from Jolo. He agreed with the other four regarding the bad treatment and the impossibility to escape.

(2) Puerto de la Barcazas, "Filipinas y Jolo."

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Lest we forget value formation

LETTERS

I left school that saved our nationwide manners to improve the teaching of English, Science and Math in the public elementary schools, we might put further on the relentless student equality scandal... has already visibly ignored...minimum of child education, value formation.

There are upbeside notes of deterioration a child's competency in the academic subjects, and remedial measures are not evidently lost. There is cause for GMRC (good manners and right conduct). The abundance of unwholesome values formed in childhood shows only in maturity—said to perpetuity.

At least for those of us who have seen how things were some there is less decision ago, there is reason to believe that the home, the school, the Church and the State have gone askance in Our value formation of the youth. Most parents now think that their obligation begins and ends in providing their children with food, shelter, clothing and education, and that all others belong to the teachers. The need of moral guidance is also in the home likewise finds inadequate nurturing in the school. Proof is kindergarten tried to focus more on teaching their pupils how to read, write, speak English and to count, which should rather be introduced yes in Grade 1. The Church will work catechism in public schools, and rise is laudable: has gone are the good old days when parish priests would also run how for their young flock had most spiritually formed through catechism sessions conducted at the town plaza each summer vacation. Personal values are my concern remained or manufactured, says the Civil Code. But the State delights to assume that ancient and responsibility by passing laws for every inadmissible habit that parents and schools fail to nip in the bud. And we ironically, we have more smokers and beer drinkers among youngsters today than we had in the past.

In short ways than one, the continuing moral degeneration in Philippine society is largely attributable to defective value formation...at home as home and in the school—which intellectual education has not improved. Lowering have "English, Science and Math will have taken not elementary school graduates better prepared for high school and college, and eventually for lower jobs. Without good value education, however, they would fail in be the kind of God-loving and law-abiding citizens we want of them many years from now.

—ASSYL L. EBRADO,
39 Natal St., Golden Country Homes, Ubanglian, Batangas City

Cassava flour for 'pan de sal'

WOW that we are in a financial crisis, we bullet about the ever-shrinking pan de sal. The reason is the high cost of imported wheat.

Some 20-30 years ago, a law or various one under was issued requiring all bakeries to mix 20 percent cassava flour with wheat flour in whatever is baked. is now supposed to be a big economic idle but only on paper. Obviously, the agency yet

Time for GSIS to focus on serving its members

PUBLISHED in the GSIS Act of 1997, the GSIS certificate of membership acknowledges anywhere a beneficiaries of GSIS is referred as "integral part of this Certificate" for purposes of social security benefits. The certificate itself negates the arguments that survivors should not receive GSIS benefits because they have not contributed to the GSIS funds, and that the grant of added benefits to them will be burden to the active members.

The present increase and the Christmas bonus for survivors have long been granted since 1991 under GSIS Resolution 1015, and this has resulted to no harm to the GSIS pension fund. In fact, current GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia has repeatedly asserted that the GSIS is in "rich of viability, the like. I and the most profitable and financially very sound government agency of the SOCCs. "The financial soundness cannot be just because of the exclusion of survivors pensioners from the 2003 Christmas bonus. On this point, the Board should recognize their vested rights to an "integral part" of the GSIS.

Remember, as a member, the GSIS has to preserve or increase the benefits of all its members. We are talking here not only about insurance benefits, but also about loan benefits.

There is no question that many members from the Church are not able to go certain loans from the GSIS because the agency was supposedly in the process of computerizing its records. Members have even that there was some kind of failure to properly post and credit loan payments.

The GSIS has now its members from with some data input from the new computerized records. But, the forms are filled with discrepancies. This is the very reason government offices are difficult, including we less than Gone' justice Alexis Torres Jr., are criticizing the GSIS for sloppy records-keeping.

In another instant, a government employee has been retired by the office to have retained all his loan payments, but GSIS records do not show this.

Whatever are the GSIS' reasons for its shortcomings, the fact is it has failed to preserve the loan benefits of members. The GSIS management at this time, the opposite of what it is meant to do—is failed to preserve and increase the benefits of its members; it failed to deliver improvable service to all times.

After amassing huge profits, as Garcia claims, and concentrating on computerization or systems modernization, it is high time for the GSIS to focus on becoming a system that is ready for its members. Anyone else all cases for its members.

—ESTRELLA D. SOLOMON, PhD,
University of the Philippines

Unimplemented laws

LET'S check on the number of laws ignored by the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Congresses) that remain unimplemented up to the present time owing to lack of money, absence of implementing rules and regulations or what have you.

If the number of such unimplemented laws is quite substantial, I appeal to the members of the 13th Congress to take a leave of absence. The savings to be derived from that move should be used in implementing such laws.

After all, what is the use of passing more and more laws when there are no funds available to implement them? We will just be creating false hopes among our people.

—PAUL B. MERZEL,
Sikka Court, Molavedoy, Marilima City

Poloroctok not a 'sleepy town'

THE premises in the article, "In more ante become farming success better side of county," which appeared on the front page of the Sept. 27 issue of the Inquirer.

The appearance the newspaper for publishing the story which recognized the efforts of foreign donors, like the USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao, to improve the economic life of our low-income families. However, describing Del Monte as a "sleepy municipality" is something that is highly objectionable. It is a sweeping statement that a country is backward and unacceptable to our people.

The Commission on Audit's report on the financial performances of municipalities in 2003 shows that our municipality is on top of other towns in South Cotabato province. Moreover, as a first-class municipality we have been consistently conferring top honor from half of the province's total property tax collections.

—FERNIDA MUNAR,
municipal information officer,
Office of the Mayor,
Polomolok, South Cotabato

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish anonymous letters, but names withheld upon request.

GSIS: propaganda and reality

REACTING to a joint administration resolution of Congress, many I being due to the interests of the public:

As an RTC judge, I hold GSIS Policy No. 4000013900 which mandated more than a year ago on June 2, 2003. When I claimed the maximum value of P150,000, I was paid only the measly amount of P90,020.26. The GSIS claimed in the voucher that the Supreme Court failed to remit the premiums in the amount of P61,240.74, namely loan payments in the amount of P58,484.72 and policy loan payments in the amount of P57,130.88. I received certifications from the accounting department of the Supreme Court to

Kudos to PNCC

I HAPPENED to be at the Sta. Rita exit of the North Luzon Expressway one day last month when I saw traffic enforcers from the Philippine National Construction Corp. weighing and apprehending overloaded vehicles. I noticed that the enforcers used modern weighing scales to make sure that all vehicles—particularly trucks and vans—complied with the anti-overloading law. To make sure that everyone knew they were business, they even put up this big sign by the road announcing the implementation of Republic Act 8794.

It was good to see the PNCC seriously going about the business of ridding the NLEX of overloaded trucks. As we know, overloaded trucks are a major cause of accidents as other motorists. Imagine shooting a lane with a truck carrying heavy iron or construction materials whose driver is tired and sleepy from a night of driving or, worse, has a deadline to keep. We don't want to see another repeat of the recent Internorth like that even if you're driving at 50 KPH.

But it's not too late. We can immediately start the project as it only takes 9-10 months for owners to be harvestable and 12-15 months for the roots to be consumed.

Could the government's economic czars and the business process please look into this?

—DANIEL F. INVESTI JR.,
San Vicente, Jaro, Iloilo City

Inq Box

Dear Readers, Send us your comments, suggestions and views on today's news or how it was delivered. Tell us about the stories you are interested in and the things you want improved in your favorite newspaper. Send INQUIRER mail (but keep words under 75 by message and send to FEEDBACK or OPEN FORUM). The most interesting letters will be kept in the bags of each section.

Do you think something good will come out of the investigation of the alleged 10-billion wealth of some AFP officials?

"perhaps!", "maybe!", "sometime!", "inevitably", "probably", —"never no!"

—Alfonso Salazar, Mandaue, Cebu

Yes, manila and proper power are vigilant. Let us convince it is welcome.

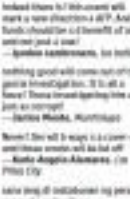
—Cheryl Pitago, Cebu

Mientras lang maalam ng mga tao ang kanilang mga karapatan at tungkulin sa lipunan, walang pag-asa na kailan pwede ang mga tulad ni Garci. O God help us!

—Victorita Sangalang, Dagupan

Oo, di investigation is a cross between Clifford's gimmick with Dog and Lassie's rescues.

—gary vergara, Cebu City



same old shit, different day.

—ernesto canay, pasig city

Indeed there is! We cannot will start a new direction a AFP. And funds should be confiscated of all, and not just a few!

—Ignacio Santamaria, las nieves

nothing good will come out of the garci investigation. It is all a fiasco! Some time and sparing time are just as corrupt!

—Carlos Mesina, Muntinlupa

Boom! Sec will it ways is a cover-up and these senate will be hot off!

—Karla Angela Alamares, Cebu Pilot City

sana ang di natitinag ng para ang mata ng tao.

—michel laggoa, lipata

The truth will not be told.

—Ramon Cruz, pasig city

Yes, if investigation is a cross between Clifford's gimmick with Dog and Lassie's rescues.

—gary vergara, cebu city

No, if investigation is a cross between Clifford's gimmick with Dog and Lassie's rescues.

—Nonoy Cruz, manila

"what GSIS does ANY INVESTIGATION, agrees daily from it GMA'S has brought to us? NOTHING. Now it NEEDS GSIS to dismiss DUMB SLONG."

—Ted Benitez, Cavite City

no good can come out on the 10-billion wealth of AFP officials, they deserve effect in organization any corruption a day.

—Ismael D. Intengan, general santos city

Hard! Think so.

—aaron mendez II, davao city

No. If any wrong doer dies in a fire then. (I'm not sure when I said up-I don't do religion) GMA will not stop, as in many days. Will not stop!

—Mike Bating, Quezon City

to the AFP officials may must resign and investigate well.

—marianne gomez, dulcain city

None!

—J. Jacuna Martin, San Agustin, Isabela

INVEST Ball 100.* from disagreeing if needs a withdrawal with Chappals, they will come Gen. Garcia's son, as more connections are open not

—Aldo Edpalina, Manila City

something good will come out the 8 complete coup proof tax on 4 bona fide

—gracinda ruiz, dapaul city

nah, is it always the same as in Bang Bang Bangkok

—Nonoy Cruz, manila

sometime just will come out if there's of which's, which's, which's, he did it and it's

—aloua sua, laguna city

Yeah! I think so, if yields is don't working I'll take a gallon of it BUT that if gov't is service.

—Edwin B. Trinidad, ORMOC, Samar

No, but these officials are the most powerful, don't people to investigating don.

—gilda tabuelda, manila

as always, WILL! but is some AFP Officials only! if investigation should include Gen. Angelo Reyes' retirement pay too.

—Felicia B. pelidaba, quezon city

perhaps there will be a good result of it investigation. A question to researching will it be taken a it worked?

—EDWIN U. ALCANTARA, QC

I don't know. city wait & see.

—anna marie ramos-lim, quezon city

Maybe so it will confirm graft & corruption is steeped by d' majority group.

—maria luz mallangay, manila

yes i do, although it will not be right & it will be a big difficulty

—Nonoy Cruz, manila

Nope! Just look back investigations. Hmm, nothing will come out of it to implicate/suspect any top officials. Very difficult to get to crime-sus.

—mike, sapulcaran city

I hope something good comes out of it after more than 2 yrs. no prosecutions, otherwise the govt will finally sink

—M. pearls abaca, naga city

"If I had no knee all along I was

no, but, it official always involving this right to pull investigation when being questioned about his ill-gotten wealth

—Alvar Jan B. Pinto, cebu, dumaguete

SURE, IS I'M very basic, awareness to everyone.

—alvar tan, cambanaga city

something good? for what-wealth, perhaps. No, nothing good as usual.

—Hazel Sapalan, Silay City

I think these dirty cases never likely will be one of those good cases pending and unsolved

—nolan Rivera, pasig city

Yes, recovering what was looted maybe impossible, but future attempts are possible, or with AFP. Finally.

—Elma B. III

nothing, more mess, gangsters, jail like it other areas, if it compares to corruptions, 100% negative pure, economic dyan institusi sa pag-unlad, pa it it nah.

—roger garcia, pasig

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"If I had no knee all along I was

the president cancer of our nation.

—Delbert Lazaro, Los Baños, Laguna

BUT SURE will come out of this investigation, since Gen. Hermogenes will nobody has been prosecuted. Corruption is equated will him ... Incredible.

—rachel navarro, dis. ave. manila

I think she is, keep all ethics lobbyist, di pabebehayan anymore.

—Harold Harvey Lu, Davao City

Just like it other scandals (ie), dito lesse will pass, once newspapers no longer carry it in their front page.

—jimmy samonte, manila

of course yes! there is, Senate WILL! Be, cuz the future... it is where it stability of our nation Bolante nasa likod.....one way or another.

—MARIA UERRI, J.C.

from now on, d public, with d help of media, will be more vigilant in exposing systems that allow such corrupt practices.

—Jaime m. diaz de rivera, quezon, cebu

now dat investigations are on-going, we are given hope dat d govt can minimize corruption and arrest bad. What cannot good officials do? Hmmm!

—Francis Sanonda, QC

Across the NATION

Transport grinds to a halt in Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—Saying it was fed up with the successive and "seemingly unending" increases in the prices of petroleum products, the transport sector in the entire Bicol Region launched a two-day strike that started 5 a.m. yesterday, paralyzing public transport and prompting public schools to suspend classes.

The protesters said the move was only a warm-up for a nationwide strike in the coming days.

In Legazpi yesterday, all passenger buses, Filcabs or utility vans and jeepneys plying some six routes, both provincial and trans-provincial, were off ready 100 percent paralyzed, said Bicol Lenito and Theodore Matsunaga of Catalyst Partos Bicol in an interview with the Inquirer.

Most schools (private) were also establ. lished in strategic areas to reach of the in Bicol provinces where the strikers converged for their activities.

In Albay alone, about five mass action centers were set up as early as yesterday morning in Barangay Bañag and Banga (now Shell station, in Barangay Imbang and downtown Legazpi City and in front of the Bicol University in the Banga Legazpi boundary.

Support

According to Bayan/Bayo regional chair Willy Marbella, the two-day strike is far different from the previous movement since this time, they got solid support from almost all sectors as shown in yesterday's result.

"To our one-week preparation and consultations even with school and office administrators, they really cooperated with our cause," he said.

He said the objective of the two-day strike is to denote the flawlessness indignant mass against President Macapagal. Arroyo's alleged commission with the regions of the three gate of Sino—Bicol, Shell and Cabon.

Marbella said that since January to October of this year, diesel prices had increased 53 times and gasoline from P23.34 per liter from the original 39.3 a liter.

During the same period, premium gasoline increased 31 times and now costs P39.63 per liter while liquified petroleum gas (LPG) also increased eight times during the period, to now hallooning from P57.7 in January to as high as P918 each tank at present.

The group also demanded a rollback of prices of these petroleum products to the 2003 levels where diesel was only P35.58 and gasoline, 39.8.58.

The strikers also urged the scrapping of the Oil Deregulation Law and asked legislators to act on the matter.

Nationalization

They called for the nationalization of the oil industry so that the government could later bill control over the prices.

Marbella and Lanuza, however, said that they are not demanding any increase in passenger fare.

According to them, their move is cited as most Bicolanos, being in the country's second poorest region, can no longer afford the effects of skyrocketing prices of most vital commodities.

Manolo Llanos, Union vice president, who was here earlier, said the two-day strike is just a preparation for a national movement.

He also added that a similar strike in the transport sector was already conducted in Mindoro and Surlac earlier.

The strike, however, failed to force banks to suspend transactions as they opened yesterday.

Overloading

Tricycles, especially those without franchises or colorum, did not join the strike and were seen overloaded with passengers, except for the presence of Camarines Sur's where the strike got full support even from the tricycle drivers.

According to the strike organizers, they had nothing to do with the tricycle drivers.

In Naga City, tricycle drivers did not join the first day of strike.

Offices in the areas and classes in this city were suspended.

Boy Salbanera, leader of Bicol Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association, said tricycle drivers wanted a rollback in gasoline prices while the jeepney drivers wanted a rollback in diesel prices.

There was an unconfirmed report that the tricycle drivers would join the second day of strike today.

Fernando Imperio, president of Bayan-ng Sorsogon Quezon, said he thought that joining the strike was okay. "We have to sacrifice but it is for our own good," Ronnie Lanuza with reports from Arnulfo Legaspi and Michael Angeles, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

"Na sa paglutas ng ating pambansang krisis sa pananalapi, sana'y manaig muli ang pagkakaisa na naging susi ng aking paglaya sa Iraq."

"Sa paghahalilgtas ito sa isang mahapit na kapahoran, tara-parang pananalamat ang mais kong ipanabot. Sa mahabaging Diyos. Sa mga lider ng ating bansa. At sa lahat ng mga Pilipino na para sa ating kalayaan ay buong pagkakaisang dinasal ang nagsusumamo nilang mga tinig hanggang sa pintuan ng langit.

Kay gandá ng ating ipinamalas sa buong mundo. Mayaman at dukha, Muslim at Kristiyano, nabiklá't sundalo. Lahat sila'y nanalangin na ako'y mangip. Sana ay muli tayong magkatas para mahatas itong mahabbang krisis sa pananalapi. Upang sanumbal ang bayan at magwakas na ang pangingibang-bansa nanang mga OFW."

ANGELO DELA CRUZ

Malambot at magpagmahal ang pusong Pinoy. Kaya nga't nadama ng buong sambayanan ang panaghoy ng isang anyang nalagay sa panganib sa isang banyagang lupain. Isang anyang nagdis ng langkot at hanbay. Nawalay sa kanyang mga mahal sa buhay. At nalayo sa mapagkalingang kandungan ng sariling bayan.

Muli nating patunayan kung gaano kahigpit ang pagkakabigkis ng ating mga puso't damdamin, ngayong nahaharap ang ating bansa sa isang matinding krisis sa pananalapi. Do ang ating mahintalong:

- Labanan ang pagnanakaw sa kabang-bayan
- Agad tayong magbayad ng tamang buwis
- Iharangi ng resibo sa ating mga biniibili.
- At suportahan ang mga panukalang batas para sa dagdag na kita ng pamahalaan.

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29th Floor Chatham House, 116 Herrera Corner Valero Streets,
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Reb slain by troops under ex-NPA captive

By Jhoeson Nagallaran
PIM Magna Rivera

CEBU CITY—A suspected rebel was killed in a clash Sunday in Tubigon, Bohol with elements of the 1st Scout Ranger Battalion based in Carmen, Bohol under the command of former New People's Army captive Lt. Col. Noel Buan.

The Scout Ranger team was on a reconnaissance operation when it chanced upon some 20 armed men believed to be New People's Army (NPA) rebels in the boundaries of Sitio Hinagtas, Barangay Tan-awan and Sitio Estremas, Barangay Bijao Sur in Tubigon, Bohol shortly before 1 a.m. Sunday.

Maria Concha, 34, of Cahayagan, Calape died after the 45-minute gunfight that started at around midnight.

Colonel Command (Command) spokesperson Lt. Col. Jefferson Omandam said the shootout operation continued until about 4 a.m. The suspected rebels were believed to belong to the Front 1 Ground Sharpen Regional Party Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

Omandam said the Scout Rangers also recovered an M-14 Armalite rifle and a bandolier from the site.

M/Sgt. Sacrieco Tabuling Jr. of the 62nd Reliabuir Group (CRG) of the 407th Bohol, said Buan did not actually join in the operation as earlier reported. He said Lt. Magtangol Panopio, team leader of the 2nd Scout Ranger Company of the 1st Scout Ranger, led the patrol.

Omandam said Buan's men were conducting a strike reconnaissance operation when they encountered a group of about 20 communist rebels.

"They simply scampered away to different directions after the encounter," Omandam said in mixed Cebuano and English.

PRIMITIVE WAYS
A farmer in Lucban, Quezon resorts to drying palay on the road as the lack of machinery and equipment for palay drying continues to haunt farmers in many areas in Quezon province.

₱4.8M a year pay lures Davao nurses to US

DAVAO CITY—As a government nurse, Jess Salvacion, 33, used to get a take-home pay of barely P15,000 a month working for Southern Davao's largest government hospital here.

Ten years into his job, he posted his resume on the Internet and got calls from recruitment agencies worldwide, one of which was fast enough to process his legal papers to the United States.

So, in December this year, Salvacion is going one of the country's weak on an ever-growing room (OR) nurse in New York.

The pay? Only $18 an hour, or, the equivalent of ₱4.8 million a year.

Salvacion, who will leave behind a wife (who is also a nurse) and a six-year-old daughter in order to become workaholics in the States before Christmas, is just a face among the thousand of nurses leaving the country each year to look for greener pastures abroad.

Last year alone, close to 250,000 Filipino nurses had left the country to relocate abroad, according to reports from the World Health Organization (WHO).

Choice destination

Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) data also showed that the United States—still one of the top three choice destinations for Filipino nurses abroad—has been accepting the most highly skilled and the best professionals, who are increasingly drawn out of the country each year in search of better life.

But Salvacion said current and other medical practitioners are hardly the one to blame for the continuing exodus.

"For us, it's just a matter of survival," said Salvacion, who left his work as head nurse at the Davao Medical Center (DMC)'s orthopedic department last year for a better-paying job as clinical instructor at the Davao Doctors' Hospital, and later, as quality officer of a paramedical school nurturing till-bound nurses here.

He said nurses are leaving the country because the government would hardly pay them decent salaries.

"I think we'll be in a better position to help the country when we work abroad," he said, referring to the remittances of overseas Filipinos workers estimated to have reached $6 billion last year, making up 10.8 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Skills shortage

He said there is a shortage of nurses and health care professionals here but the government does not have enough budget to give them better pay. This shortage is readily felt in government hospital wards, where one or two nurses are stationed to take care of 50 to 60 patients. Ideally, a nurse should take care only of five patients, he said.

While government nurses usually get as much as P15,000 a month, nurses in private hospitals can get as low as P6,000 a month.

Ill duty hours, nurses could get an average of $396,000 in Saudi Arabia to P2.9 million a year in the US, according to POEA data.

Salvacion said that his brief encounters with nurses in Ireland and South Korea in previous medical missions he had joined have convinced him that his training was at par with the world standards.

"We were never lagging behind, as far as our training is concerned," he said, "in fact, I am confident that our training has been one of the best in the world."

According to POEA, the US has been the traditional destination for Filipino nurses but other countries like Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, Ireland, Libya, Singapore and other countries in Europe and the Middle East are fast catching up.

But Salvacion said going out for a Filipino nurse is not always an easy. Even after three agencies had scouted him on the basis of his resume, his 10 years of actual experience in hospital wards, and a master's degree (in public administration), Salvacion had to pass a battery of interviews qualifying exams in the US. Geraldina Lucero, PIM Mindanao Bureau

BEAST OF BURDEN
Farmers parade a carabao with their message painted on the animal's body at the Department of Agriculture office in Quezon City during a recent rally there to press for better treatment from the government.

Power co-op castigated for tax-driven rate hike

LEGAZPI, SANTOS CITY—The city council has castigated the management of production cooperative Sorsogon II Electric Cooperative (Sorsoreco II) for filing a petition at the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) asking for an increase in its power rates.

The Supreme Court earlier ruled Sorsoreco II is not exempted from paying real property taxes to the city government.

For years, the cooperative did not pay its real property obligations in the local government thinking that it was exempted.

To be able to pay its past accounts on real property taxes, the Sorsoreco II management submitted to the ERC on May 31 a petition to the ERC asking for a new round of power rate increase.

Sorsoreco management said it could not pay its tax obligations if the city government would insist that it has to pass on the burden to consumers.

A rabidly irked Committee engaged the Sorsoreco II management adopt its own austerity measures by cutting down the perks and allowances of its officials and employees.

Bearing on the burden to consumers, he said, was unfair.

Employees of Sorsoreco II are enjoying a 15% lifetime discount on electric consumption. This does not include their grocery and other allowances.

Members of the ERC board of directors are also receiving per diems and travel allowances every month.

The city council, which is strongly opposing Sorsoreco's plan to impose new power rate increases, has been conducting hearings to find a solution how the cooperative could settle pay taxes to the city government.

The city council has been urging the management of Sorsoreco II to submit a payment scheme.

Agaton Uy-Amin, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Court says Ibalois can stay in park

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TUBA, Benguet—A regional trial court in La Union dismissed a Philippine Tourism Authority petition to expel Ibalos from the Mateo Shrine, where the controversial Mateo bust stands.

This now refutes claims PTA's plans to auction or lease its memorabilia assets by yesterday, a PTA official said on Wednesday.

The Mateo Park, which is officially called the President's Park Complex in honor of the late strongman Ferdinand E. Marcos, is an old PTA asset because almost all facilities in the park have been reclaimed by Ibaloi dwellers, the official said.

It was included in an inventory list of PTA assets, which the PTA board of directors approved for "divestment" in September when it directed PTA General Manager Robert Swan Barbers to prepare a lease development plan for these properties.

Frozen assets

The PTA asked Judge Ismael Mari Dres Cabrera the activities of the heirs of Lamberto Quidilen, who have started fencing their claims and have planted banana trees there.

The agency said the Kimmie family in 1997 when Catalina Lim Lebatton, a public schoolteacher, first entered the park.

"The complex has an 18-hole golf course and a clubhouse," which it has been converted or are now occupied by the Ibalois, according to the PTA petition.

But Che-ian Judge Belinda Marrero of the regional trial court in La Trinidad, Benguet, voided in April 2004 the denial of a decision transferred to PTA all of Marcos' properties in eight cases lands, including Tuba in Benguet and Sitio Palina in Puga, La Union.

PTA elevated Marrero's decision before the Court of Appeals.

Marrero cited Marrero's decision in junking the PTA petition in a seven-page decision.

Ownership issue

"Since the issue of ownership is now (a) pending resolution with the Court of Appeals, it is but proper that the injunction be applied forever the appellate court which now has jurisdiction over the main case," he ruled.

Marrero said "nothing in the petition shows that (PTA) is seeking to recover anything from (the Ibaloi) family."

"What petitioner is simply asking is to prevent the (PTA) from doing something within the property line, it is (PTA) had once introduced improvements on the property. However, these improvements have already been removed or demolished," he said in the decision.

"Thus, it is in law that an injunction will not prevent the performance of a act already done," he said.

Lawyer said the decision earlier that her Ibaloi parties were removed into relocating their hands to the PTA towards the end of the 1970s.

Mayor's spouse arrested for extortion

By Jhunnex Napallacan and Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The husband of a town mayor in Cebu was arrested by National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agents on Saturday for allegedly extorting P150,000 from operators of five fishing boats that were seized for allegedly illegally fishing in the waters of Bantayan, Cebu.

Paulina Mancio, husband of Madridejos Mayor Leticia Mancio, and his two companions were arrested by NBI agents from Negros Occidental at Mancio's residence in Barangay Talangnan, Madridejos, one of the three towns in Cebu known as Camotes Island in southern Cebu.

Also arrested were Jun Escalera and Antonio Hongren, both political supporters of the Mancios.

The 15 man NBI Special Lawyers led by Eduardo Ezwada said Mancio was arrested in an entrapment operation based on the complaint of fishing boat operators Mercedes Ramos and Andy Chua, both of Cadiz City, Negros Occidental.

The two operators said members of the Madridejos Bantay Dagat arrived their five fishing vessels on Thursday while these were in open sea. They said that after seizing the vessels, Mancio allegedly demanded P150,000 from them so he would release the fishing boats.

Mancio has been appointed vice chair of the Madridejos Bantay Dagat by his mayor wife. The entire Bantay Dagat team is headed by the mayor's brother, Eddie Villacrucis.

The NBI Special said they planned an entrapment operation against Mancio and his lawyer. NBI agents posing as employees of CYC Fish Ventures, which is owned by Ramos, said Mancio and his two companions were waiting for them at the Bantayan Port to receive the money. They said that after receiving the money, Mancio and his companions were arrested.

Escalera, who was brought by the NBI agents to threshold belonging his arrest and was detained in Cebu, insisted in a cellular phone interview yesterday that there was no extortion.

Escalera said they approached and the five fishing boats with about 20 people on board for violating our just the town's ordinance but also the National Fisheries Act, which banned commercial fishing vessels within 15 km of municipal waters.

Escalera said all the owners of the five fishing boats have to pay almost P300,000 for the release of their fishing boats.

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Gold rush area folk want site turned to town

DARO CITY—Barangay officials of gold-rich Mt. Diwata in Monkayo, Compostela Valley, are planning to turn their village into a separate town.

Francisco Dio, Mt. Diwata barangay chair, said the barangay council had already approved a resolution to this effect.

The said Mt. Diwata is qualified to be a town because it meets the necessary criteria required by the local government code.

He said a municipality shall have at least 5,000 hectares land area, 25,000 total population, and annual tax income.

"Mt. Diwata has an 8,384 hectares land area, 40,000 population and is the top income-generating barangay in Monkayo," he said.

The said turning their barangay into a municipality could make their place more progressive due to an increase in funding from the local and national governments.

He said they could also use more than enough funds for infrastructure projects.

But Tito said he is supporting political rival Monkayo mayor Manuel Williams to block the move of the barangay council.

He said he already received letters that the landowners is not favorable to the idea.

Williams' elder brother Joel was the town's former mayor until he was shot dead in a cockfight arena in Davao City two years. Anthony Alfada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Toilet builders unearth treasure coins

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A joy swimming since three gallons of old silver coins was found behind the Cuyo Elementary School in the municipality of Cuyo, a northern Palawan town.

Cuyon Mayor Emilino Mamaligan in yesterday confirmed to the Inquirer the presence of the treasure. Students were found last fri. 30 by some teachers and parents of the students who volunteered to perform manual labor to help construct toilets for the school.

Mayor Mamaligan said the treasure hunt for jar was found, the teachers continued digging and found some adobe clubs. Mamaligan did not personally see the coins because when he came to know of the digging, the treasure were already kept or sold to collectors, who arrived at the Municipal hall before 7:30 a.m. on Oct 23.

The 501 spain said Mamaligan immediately demanded the money from them. They said they actually Mamaligan what he received the marked money from them.

While awaiting Mamaligan, they said they saw several firearms and ammunition on top of a bed, which they also seized.

Lawyer Pedro Jose, director of PDEA Regional, said the NBI would file counter charges and illegal possession of firearm charges against Mamaligan and his companions.

Buffao, who was brought by the NBI agents to threshold belonging his arrest and was detained in Cebu, insisted in a cellular phone interview yesterday that there was no extortion.

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Sample code

The said he was handed a piece of coin by one parent.

The coins were sold as P100, P300, or as high as P1,000 per piece depending on the denomination and the age of the coin.

The school principal Gloria Mamba officials whether the jar was found appreciative of the coins has Mayor Mamaligan ordered it stopped five days ago.

The site is now being guarded by village watchmen and some policemen.

Mamaligan had already issued buyers.

SPO2 Florencio Hernandez, however, confirmed that most coins bear marks that it was dated 1889 and engraved with Spanish King Carlos' name.

Other treasures

Years ago, there were old jars and porcelain found in different sites in Cuban, which is part of the Calamianes group of islands.

In the 1600s, Calamianes became the foothold for Spanish colonization of southern Luzon and Palawan.

When the Americans arrive, Cuban was established as a big province, Adelfa Suarez, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

2 more Mindanao projects listed as GMA priority

JOLO CITY—Two more Mindanao road projects made it to the list of President Macapagal-Arroyo's priority projects.

Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza identified the two road projects as the Zamboanga peninsula coastal road network that would connect Zamboanga del Norte's town of Liloy with Zamboanga City, and the proposed Cabo Lozon-Tawitawi Coastal Road.

Dureza said the inclusion of the two projects in the list was vigorously pursued by Tim Bilas, Asian Economic Development Council (MEDCo) because these would enhance the transport of goods to various parts of Mindanao.

The 240-km Zamboanga peninsula coastal road network would also connect Liloy with Labason, Gutalac, Baliguian, Sirawai, Siocon, Ribaya and Limpapa border.

"Let's just look for some money

in order to pursue this road project," Bilas is quoted Dureza as done so as saying.

Dureza said the coastal road project would ease the burden of traders in transporting agricultural and marine products to other areas of the Zamboanga region.

Currently, traders resort to sea travel to move their goods there.

Dureza said the Lake Lanao Circumferential Road was in the pipeline under the Mindanao Roads Improvement Project (MRIP) Phase 1, which is being funded by the Asian government.

"The inclusion of these two major road projects in the new memorandum of agreement between President Arroyo's energy resolve to resolve peace and development in Mindanao via physical integration," he said, Anthony Alfada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Sanitary engineer's seal needed in water for drinking

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Before you buy or drink your water, bottled or from a piped source, check out first if the supplier has the seal of a professional sanitary engineer (PSE).

If there is none, chances are the facilities have not been designed by or have not passed health, sanitation and environmental standards, said the Pilla are bound by law to do.

The Professional Regulation Commission's Board of Sanitary Engineering upheld the regulatory functions of Pilla over government agencies, waterworks, bottled water and refilling stations, tanker, public institutions and similar establishments.

Copies of the board's Resolution No. 3, made effective on Aug. 25, is being distributed to local governments, most of which, especially those at the municipal and city levels, do not have PSEs.

The resolution shed light on the issue of compliance by many companies.

It was the Philippine Association of Certified Water Operators that sought the clarification through a letter to Presidential Municipal deputy and the Philippine Society of Sanitary Engineers in January 2003.

The PSEE said in 1999 and 2000, "there was one chief of the water refilling stations were uncertified or have not complied with the other parameters as mandated by the Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water."

"Water purification plants, particularly bottled water companies and water refilling stations that were victims of unscrupulous individuals, groups, associations or organizations, franchisees and the likes to collaborate with some government employees are now operating outside of the professional practice law, thereby endangering public health and safety," the PSEE said in a paper.

It was referring to Republic Act 1364, which authorizes registered sanitary engineers to design water sub-stations and distribution systems, reservoirs, drainage, sewage disposal units, among other tasks.

In Pampanga, the provincial health office said only a few of the more than 200 refilling stations and seven tanker districts surveyed by Pilla.

The board, through the consultation, ordered government agencies and local governments not to allow building and health officers to approve or issue permits for water collection, distribution, purification, treatment and sewa. All those shall be done by or under the supervision of Pilla.

"All from source line of business check with the manufacturer, sale, supply or distribution of any materials, devices, gadgets and equipment used in the collection, distribution, purification and storage of water shall have a PSE . . ." the resolution said.

3 Basilan informers each get P18.7M

From page A1

The three had provided information that led government troops to Hamsiraji Sali, also known as Jun Kasanjan, who was later killed in a firefight in Basilan on April 8 this year, the US Embassy said in a statement.

Sali was a leader of the Abu Sayyaf, a Moro-named group which gained notoriety years ago for seizing mostly foreign tourists in exchange for millions of dollars in ransom and for executing some of their hostages, including an American.

Sali was the second senior ASG member on the US wanted list to be killed. The other three, including leader Khaddafy Janjalani, remain at large.

The Abu Sayyaf had been linked by both Washington and Manila to the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden.

The gang, together with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army, had been placed on the US watchlist of foreign terrorist organizations for posing a threat to Americans.

Mamaradlo voiced the hope that the reward would encourage others "to make a similar commitment to stop the war and bring to justice" Khaddafy Janjalani, Abu Sulaiman, Ibrahim Hapilan and other "known terrorists ... so we can end forever the depredations of the ASG and other terrorist organizations."

"This is the first, but we hope not the last reward paid to the Philippines under the Branch for Justice Program. Because the simple truth is that governments alone can never completely destroy the terrorist," he said in a statement.

"To eradicate this disease once and for all, the support, courage and strength of the people are essential."

Mamaradlo said the money was part of the US Department of State's Rewards for Justice Program, which was designed to encourage people to provide information "that will lead to the arrest and conviction of terrorists worldwide."

Also present at the ceremony were Justice Secretary Josel Gonzalez, Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, Philippine National Police Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco and Lt. Gen. Efraim Ilenga of the military's Southern Command, among others.

Mamaradlo noted that since the situation in Basilan had stabilized, some international and national aid agencies, including the US Agency for International Development (USAID), had come in to implement development projects.

He said, for instance, that in the past three years, USAID had expanded its range of activities in the island to include infrastructure and educational projects.

"As I look around me, I see the fruits of peace. A peace built by the everyday courage of the people of this island, with assistance from our two governments," he said.

In April, Mamaradlo handed over a reward of about P680,000 to a mother, informant who had given information leading to the capture of Alfonser Limbong, alias Commander Robot, who had beheaded one of two Americans.

The Rewards for Justice Program provides payments to those who help in the capture or killing of certain suspected terrorists. A reward of $25 million is being offered under this program for the capture of Bin Laden.

With AP, WPP and Reuters

MS PARAGUAY Yanina Gonzales hugs award for best in swimsuit. AFP/STR

Brazilian ...

From page A1

queen candidates to be aware of environmental problems faced by their respective countries.

During 3 1/2 weeks in the Philippines, contestants helped clean a beach of trash, did farm work, planted mahogany trees, biked to promote clean air and debated schools of fish into a reserve in the north, organizers said.

Among the 11 judges was Yilda Battikha, last year's crossover from Afghanistan who was condemned in her conservative homeland for appearing in a bikini. There was no Afghan competitor this year. AP

InqBox
Question of the Week
Change the world. We can make this world a better place .
As a Filipino, I can make a difference in our country by _____.
Senders of a Text & Nett published in Tuesday's InqBox will each receive an "Inquirer T-shirt!"
Key in: inquirer 2BU name/city/message.
Text your answers to 2387 (Globe) or 189 (Smart).
(Provision of text allowances)
inquirer.net/specialreading/address

Top cop says 'Partisano' exists

By Christian V. Esguerra

A TOP police investigator yesterday confirmed the existence of "Partisano," an obscure leftist group that had admitted killing Manila police legal officer Rolando Mendiola, reportedly the comrade of left-leaning protesters in the city.

Senior Supt. Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza said Partisano is the armed wing of the Partidong Manisan sa Lansangang Pilipinas, a group that traces its roots to the breakaway Manila-third party committee of the late Stalinist "Sa Diquoy" Lagman.

"It's existing, it's operational, it even participates in rallies through legal organizations," he told reporters in a press conference yesterday.

Partisano is composed of former members of the Alex Boncayao Brigade, formerly the communist mainstream's urban hit squad, according to Mendoza who has built a solid career in intelligence work by going after communist component of the Reserve Police Division's Station 6 where Martinez was commander.

But Mendoza said the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the Crime-busted unit assisting the NYPD, narrowed immediately buying the story.

"In criminal investigation, never admission cannot stand in court," he explained. "It has to be backed by solid evidence."

Another prominent angle in the Martinez murder case that he had been killed by fellow officers at the Philippine National Police Mendoza said he had heard of this theory but said it was anything but plausible, so far.

In pursuing the other angle—that the Martinez murder was a result of the colonel's long-running conflict with left-leaning protest groups—Mendoza said the public should not be misled by the manner of killing.

Just because Martinez was killed with an M-16 rifle—a deviation from leftist hit squads' standard use of pistols—does not mean groups like Partisano were already out of the picture, according to the official.

"We should understand that the modus operandi differs depending on the target," he said.

"If the person is a hard target like Martinez it's advisable to use high-powered firearms; if he's a soft target and the gun man can come close, a short firearm will suffice," he added.

In Martinez' case, Mendoza said the killing was "bold," an attack fit for a "seventy-seventeen" target like the policeman. Investigators had arrested Jose Pelicardo and a 15-year-old boy in connection with killing, but only Pelicardo had been charged. The other suspect was released for lack of evidence.

A princess with a heart for poor kids

VIP TREAT Princess Caroline of Monaco carries a visiting child, one of hundreds who welcomed her yesterday at the Makati Coliseum.

By Tarra V. Quismundo, Margaux Ortiz and Cheche Moral

ROYALTY came to town yesterday but instead of attending glitzy functions, the visitor chose to mingle with poor children in the cities of Manila and Makati.

Wearing a wide smile, Princess Caroline of Monaco carried babies and toddlers, and mingled with young adults at Manila's Reception and Action Center, a haven for lost homeless, and the Manila Youth Rehabilitation Center.

The Princess spent time with about 400 inmates and young adults in the two facilities, which got funding from Villanio Foundation Inc., a non-government organization that gives shelter to street kids, single mothers and minors involved in crime or victims of abuse. The foundation, which supports similar facilities in other Metro Manila cities, gets support from Asian Philippines, an affiliate of Amado Montilla in Monaco.

Princess Caroline, 47, the daughter of Prince Rainier and Princess Grace (Kelly, a former Hollywood star), is now president of Amade Montilla, a Monaco-based NGO that helps the less fortunate worldwide. Dominique Lemay, founder of Mobile Foundation, was beside Princess Caroline as she went around the two shelters.

The princess also visited the Makati Coliseum where hundreds of street children turned up to meet their benefactor.

"She was very kind and very passionate. She checked the facilities to see if there was anything more she could do," said Jose Hontada, head of the Manila Social Welfare Department which oversees the two facilities on the Isaac Peral Street in Ermita, Manila.

In place of a red carpet welcome, the children greeted Princess Caroline with a hearty "mabuhay" songs and traditional Filipino dances. She was also presented mementos, including brassieres made by the children.

Lemay later said the princess was touched by the children's plight. "She was very touched, and she felt the situation was terrible," he added. "She said it's not normal to put 48 children in a 30-square meter room. She was very surprised."

At the Makati Coliseum, the children broke into a welcome song as she entered. The smiling Princess took her seat at the center of the coliseum, where she chatted with street children before they performed a song and dance number for Princess Caroline. The Princess wiped tears from her eyes when a group of several children in the Philippines sang "The Greatest Gift of All" with their babies.

Lemay said Princess Caroline was "very touched" with what she saw in her tour of Villanio facilities. "We're the biggest foundation in the Philippines but they don't know us," he noted Lemay. "I told the princess, maybe they will listen to you. She's very responsive to proposals for businesses. Her presence will bring focus to the plight of the children."

General Garcia no different from solons

THERE is no love lost between Sen. Panfilo Lacson and this writer, but I certainly agree with him when he said that beleaguered Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia was no different from some lawmakers who get commission from their pork barrel.

"I don't think the congressmen realize that what they are investigating is Carlos Garcia's version of their own pork barrel," Lacson said after a long publicity silence.

His reminder was in reaction to the House inquiry into Garcia's soon-planned wealth.

The senator from Cavite is on a high moral ground as far as pork barrel is concerned. He announces with a boastful that he doesn't touch his share of the Countryside Development Fund (CDF), a major source of graft among lawmakers.

"Assuming the allegations against Garcia are true—that he took commissions from suppliers ... what is the difference between a general receiving commissions from suppliers and congressmen? It's the same banana," Lacson said.

Lacson is right. Many congressmen and senators earn huge commissions from suppliers or contractors on the cost of CDF projects. The commission rate is 20 percent of the project cost.

One former lawmaker was able to build mansions in Tagaytay City and a big house in the United States from his pork barrel funds.

It would do well for the congressmen investigating Garcia on his hidden wealth to stop their charade and leave it to the Ombudsman and the court martial to take custody of his case.

They're making laughingstocks of themselves. As they're pointing an accusing finger at Garcia, three of their fingers are pointing at themselves.

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

• • •

Commission, the act of obtaining cash from outside sources alongside against the Special Allotment Release Order (SARO) has become a bad word.

Actually, commission is practiced by almost all government offices. It has been a long-standing practice.

When the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) issues a (SARO), it does so without the corresponding cash. The SARO, in effect, is a pledge from the DBM that such and such an amount has been set aside for a government unit's budget for, say, office supplies or gasoline, and that cash is forthcoming.

But soon as we say the cash no the SARO arrives in the second quarter of the fiscal year. Meanwhile, the government unit will have to scrounge around for cash to spend on a day-to-day basis.

The chief of office asks his comptroller to obtain cash from outside sources. Among them are lenders and suppliers of items for that particular agency.

The lender or supplier extends a loan to the government agency. Interest ranges from 25 to 50 percent of the amount borrowed.

If the amount borrowed is, say P100,000, the lender gives P75,000 cash or the government agency buys supplies worth P75,000 minus the cash from the lender-seller.

The comptroller and the office chief earn commissions from the 25 percent interest paid to the lender or supplier.

Multiply 25 percent by the hundreds of millions of pesos in SARO and you get the whole picture.

The government agency is "clean" when it comes to the conversion of pages budget into cash. It's a contemporary evil.

It can only be eliminated if the DBM sends cash instead of SARO to all government units.

Embattled . . .

From page B-20

The new managers would be paying the school P250,000 every month, which Elita had said was better for the school than had received P62,000 a month from the cooperative when they were running the facility.

But the teachers claimed that Elita appeared the contract even while there was still a standing memorandum of agreement with the school administration. The school directors, however, found that the MOA was no longer in effect, as "the cooperative voluntarily relinquished the operation of the canteen." However, the body said that Elita should have been transparent in buying the new deal.

"It would not harm her if she keeps the line of communication open between her and the rest of the school population. She would have eschewed the misunderstanding presented by the contract with Mrs. Pineda," it added.

While the privatization was legal, the division suggested that the other parties seek further comments from the education department.

Book author nabbed for libel

POLICE in Cavayan, Isabela arrested a Quezon City-based book author last week in connection with a libel case filed by television talk show host Nelly Tulfo, but was immediately freed on a P10,000 bail.

Supt. Delfin Bilibo, Cavayan police director, said four policemen served the warrant on Nestor Sr. "Ning" Sentra, 66, at his house in La Paz, Quezon City, on Thursday.

Tulfo, a brother of media personalities Ramon, Erwin and Ben Tulfo, filed a libel case against Sentra in June this year. Tulfo's wife, a native of Cavayan City, is a niece of the wife of Luzia Zambrali Mayor Manuel Tin.

The case stemmed from Sentra' statements in his book, "Liars, Intimidators and Intellectuals in Philippine Media," that Nelly Tulfo was "Satan's son."

Sentra also described Ramon the TV host as an alleged "video fanatic."

In a telephone interview, Sentra claimed that Nelly Tulfo was behind the arrest.

"The arrest warrant for a case of libel filed in Cavayan City could be the work of the local police," he said.

"Why would four policemen, based more than 500 kilometers away, travel for over 10 hours and another 10 hours back just to serve a simple warrant of arrest?" Sentra asked.

He said Tulfo talked to the policemen on a mobile phone a few minutes after they arrested at Quezon City police station. Tulfo, he claimed, demanded that he (Sentra) be taken to Cavayan City.

Citing Tulfo's ties with a political family in Isabela, Sentra challenged Tulfo to file the case in Metro Manila "to level the playing field.

"If the Tulfo brothers are really brave, why don't they confront me in any Metro Manila court on theory is a level playing field, and not in Cavayan City where they have the upper hand because of Tulfo's wife who belongs to a powerful political clan there?" Sentra said. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Embattled principal moves to new school

By Sara V. Quintanilla

THE CONTROVERSY about the promotion of the Lakandula High School canteen in Tondo, Manila, refuses to die down despite the transfer to another school of the school's principal, Alice Silao.

The Division of City Schools of Manila had affirmed the legality of a new contract allowing the takeover of the canteen management, but the teachers, canteen and farm parents who had sought Silao's ouster for approving the deal said yesterday that they were not ready to give up.

Silao has been reassigned to Balagtas High School, a public high school also in Tondo. She worked for five years as principal of Lakandula.

"I warned to move to another school becomes my relationship with the teachers had worsened and the students are caught in the middle. But my fight against them will continue," said Silao.

The teachers vowed to continue their protests against private concessionaire Michelle Pineda who had taken control of the school canteen, alleging that the new contract was anomalous.

The principal had filed criminal charges of libel, oral defamation, unlawful, illegal assembly, unjust vexation, and slander and scandal against Lakandula teachers who had organized the protest against her. The teachers are also facing charges of insubordination, grave misconduct, and dishonesty in a report to the Civil Service Commission.

Unfazed, the teachers added that they would boycott canteen services.

In a two-page statement released yesterday, the school division said it found nothing wrong in the contract entered into between Silao and private concessionaire that would manage the canteen.

The teachers had filed a complaint before the school division asking that the contract be declared illegal, claiming that Silao had put aside the lessee's suspension in privatizing the canteen. The suspension was used to change the contract.

"Frankly, the complainants have not shown that Dr. Silao has violated any rule. On the contrary, it appears that the lease is more favorable to the school," said the statement, signed by Imelda Ignacio, assistant division superintendent handling affairs of secondary schools, and Victoria Macandog, administrative officer II.

(VOLT 2, p. 2, c. 1)

Meter testing resumes Nov. 4

By Clarissa s. Bacino

THE LAND Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board has extended the calibration of cab meters until after the All Saints' Day break, according to LTFRB chair Marcelina Bautista.

She said meter calibration, testing and sealing would stop temporarily tomorrow but would resume on Nov. 4.

The LTFRB wants to complete the calibration of the 62,000 registered taxis as soon as possible. "As of 12 noon (yesterday), only 16,210 out of the 62,000 have paid the fees," said Bautista.

She said the agency was targeting the calibration of the meters of 500 cabs an every satellite office each day. Operators have to pay the fees before the LTFRB can calibrate the meter.

The LTFRB opened three new calibration sites over the weekend. One is near the Ayala Business Park on Diosdado Macapagal Avenue, another is at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, and the third at Fort Bonifacio.

Its head office is open daily for the assessment and payment of fees for the new taxi fare increase.

To put some order in the process, the LTFRB assigned taxi operators to specific calibration sites depending on their numbers.

Businesses starting from letters A to C should go to Fort Bonifacio. Those with operators starting from D to M should go to Ortigas Avenue Extension, and those from N to Z should proceed to the CCP.

But the transition, Bautista said, taxi drivers could still pick up passengers even if their meters had not yet been calibrated. But they would have to charge the old rates of P28 for flag down covering the first 500 meters.

"If they overcharge customers, the driver and the operator must pay a fine of P500 each," said Bautista. But drivers and job operators who have illegally adjusted their meters to reflect new P40 flag down rates would be slapped a fine of P1,000 each. Commuters can report errant cab drivers to the LTFRB's hotlines at 9521-4467777 or 925-7777.

Taxi drivers whose meters have been calibrated, tested and sealed may now charge passengers a flag down of P30, P2.50 for every succeeding 300 meters, and P2.50 for every ten minutes of waiting time.

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SPORTS

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Editor Teddyboy S. Phillipsen

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BASKETBALL: NBA Pre-Season Games: Celtics vs Bobcats, 7:30 a.m. (+8 pm.); Sixers vs Spurs—Gary Payton leads Boston against LeBron James and his teammates in Cleveland in this warm-up for the regular season.

BILLIARDS: 10-ball Open: 2 p.m., Solar Sports—It's Day Two of this prestigious billiards event. Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

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Pettitte picked up Schilling kept Red Sox victory /A24

Django bags World Pool League title

Nips Pagulayan in stirring final

FRANCISCO "Django" Bustamante broke out of a long winless spell to bag his first World Pool League title Sunday, clobbering Alex Pagulayan, 8-7, in a dramatic all-Filipino final of the tournament in Warsaw, Poland, among six of the world's top pool players.

Bustamante won the $20,000 top prize of the lucrative tourney that also had last year's winner, Rodney Morris of the United States, Ilirot Lesoli of England, current European 9-ball champion "Thomas Engert of Germany and world pool icon Niels Feijen of Holland.

"Salamat kong kaninay na (I wained long for this)," said Bustamante after beating Pagulayan, a Canadian who was granted Filipino citizenship this year, in front of an enthralled audience at the KOT Building in central Warsaw.

Bustamante ended a 9-match winless spell after topping the 16th Naimi 9-Ball Open in Tokyo.

The match was up and cash from the start, with each player unable to decisively pull away in the end, however, it was Bustamante, a protégé of Paeng Nepomuceno headed by Atanyo "Nardi" Pinat, who held his nerves to prevail.

Bustamante advanced to the winner-take-all final by downing his teammate mate Pagulayan and Engert over 10 racks.

The native of Tarlac City led Engert, 4-2, but the German mirror of the 2004 International Challenge tied the score two racks to a finish.

Playing impressively in the early rounds the Filipino bounced Morris and then Lesoli by the same 9-6 scores. *Marlet Zernardino*

FRANCISCO "Django" Bustamante takes a tricky shot in this file photo. He pocketed $20,000 for parting away his first WPL crown.

PBA IN BACOLOD

Skidding SLR seeks ice-breaker

STA. LUCIA manages to stave for an elusive first win, colliding with a suddenly struggling Red Bull squad today at the Crest Hotel and Resorts Philippine Cup game in the University of St. La Salle-Cycle in Bacolod.

Bringing up the rear of the 10-team pack, the Realtors are favored to end a four-game losing streak in their 6 p.m. clash with the Bombers, now shorthanded with the suspension of key frontliners Jayson Castro and Mick Pennisi and relief guard Jun Ochoa.

Both squads will be coming off losses, with the Realtors bowing to Purefoods, 87-89, and Red Bull to Alaska, 75-76. The loss to Alaska was the first game that the Bombers played without Hidy and Pennisi, who were suspended along with Ochoa and three others for fatally slugging their charges in Pilipinas Obrasenta.

And it could just be the break the Realtors are waiting for after opening the tournament with one of the worst records in franchise history despite a lineup that is on formidable on the others on paper.

The Realtors' all-time worst start came just months ago during the transition Ynsua Governance, when they lost their first five games and did not figure in the title chase.

Armando Clarendon will be coming off a sparkling 37-point effort against the Yeoh Jules Holdings, but the same could not be said of the rest of the team that has not shown cohesion on the court.

Marino Aquino was a big letdown in the awards against Purefoods as Jun Limpot got the better of him twice inside the paint.

After driving past Aquino to score the Thunderbolts' go-ahead basket, Limpot blocked a potential game-tying shot by Bo Gimenez with 5 seconds that sealed the Bombers' fourth straight loss.

Talk 'N' Text continues to trend with a 5-0 slate with Shaffer covered with a 4-1 card.

Sta. Lucia and Red Bull are actually two of four fancied teams that are occupying the bottom half of the standings together with reigning Hutch Conference champ Barangay Ginebra and the Aces. *Jane Kuizon*

DONDON Hontiveros of San Miguel Beer (left) scratches for the loose ball with Eugene Tejada of Alaska during their game Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum. The Beermen won, 75-76.

WINNING FORM

Model Gerry Padilla of The Zone hits a smash during the Control area eliminations of the Battle of the Country National Interclub Pitchfork Cup at the Town Center in Pasig/Ortigas City over the weekend. Padilla and her teammates upset Manila Polo Club in the finals to clinch the area title. The Zone and MPC earned tickets to the national finals on Nov. 28-21. [illegible]

RP-Cebuana five triumphs

Pinoys overwhelm Indons for Malaysia cage crown

A COHESIVE RP-Cebuana Lhuillier squad whipped Indonesia, 87-55, Saturday night to rule the Singeri Sendikan Invitational basketball championship in Malaysia.

Veteran Ricky Calimag topscored for the Filipinos with 20 points, with new recruits Arif Bonifacio and Nino Canaleta chipping in with 17 and 14, respectively.

Coached by Dong Vergeire, the team that has embarked on a long-term program that started last year finally reaped the first fruit of its labors despite coming off a no-no start in the [illegible] Tuberose.

Team owner Jean Henri Lhuillier praised the team for its efforts.

"The boys ran their plays as they practiced in Manila," Lhuillier said.

Exploiting their height advantage, the Filipinos routed Singapore, 71-52, in the semifinals Friday night to set up the title showdown with the Indons.

MEMBERS of the Philippine-Cebuana Lhuillier quintet show off their medals and trophy after their tournament title romp. The Filipinos became the tournament favorites after they beat host Malaysia right in their first game.

Archers, Eagles get going in PBL today

COLLEGIATE teams with remaining off-season duties being their nets to a higher stage today as Ateneo Mobile skewers and FCTM-La Salle battle separate foes in the PBL Open Championship at the Pasig Sports Center.

After downing outside reinforcements, FCTM-La Salle sends its UAAP champion squad against newcomer Cranny Center Stellar at 4 p.m.

The Eagles, on the other hand, acquired, reinforcements, NCAA MVP and top rookie Gabby Espinas from Philippine Christian in a bold pre-season move that made them instant favorites against Air Philippines at 2 p.m.

GAMES TODAY (Pasig Sports Center)
To be—Ateneo Mobile Masters vs Air Philippines
To be—Cranny Center vs FCTM-La Salle

FCTM-La Salle signed with the lineup that won the UAAP over Far Eastern University recently and the Archers go into the tournament as the smallest and the youngest in the league.

"Our purpose in joining the PBL is to help the La Salle team [in the long term]. If we get players outside and then pull them out during the UAAP season, it will be different. It's a long-term preparation for the team," said Gus Almella, FCTM-La Salle's interim coach while Franz Pumaren is on leave.

"We're also the youngest team in the league. Our players are between 16-to-23 years old. We hope to learn a lot and it will be a lesson if we do well. But we will give them a good fight. Our team is in good condition," added Almella.

Ateneo Coach will be led by the multi-awarded Ronald Joseph Dandandan, a 6-foot-6 center from the University of the Visayas. The Cebu-based team will also rely on UP standouts Toti Antiado, Abby Lantoa, Bruno David and Hiroshi Cruz.

Former MBA cagers Noel Ignacheliza and Alvin Pua, and top collegiate players like Jerard Macaraeg of UST, Pedro Hubalde of University of the East, Jerwin Gaston of San Beda and Reynaldo Tik of San Beda former Ayo Philippines.

The all-La Salle squad will be led by UAAP Finals MVP Mac Cardona, Joseph Yeo, Jun Cabanos and TY Tang, Archers Po Casio, Jerwin Cinco and Mark Bautista will also stash their PBL debut today.

Another Mobile harvests, limited up by players from NCAA champion Philippine Christian U Dolphins led by MVP and Rookie of the Year Gabby Espinas, will battle a new team, Air Philippines Flight, at 2 p.m.

—Jennifer B. Ahjac

Jewellers 1st to URBL semifinals

SANTO Domingo, Rizal, Sta. Mesa completed a three-point play in the final two seconds yesterday as M. Lhuillier Cebu nipped host Rizal, 85-83, to barge into the semis of the United Regional Basketball League at the Santo Domingo People's Center here.

Rizalists received an outlet pass from Nhodelyn Enriquez after a Ryan Bernardo miss at the setup and scored while getting a foul from Lee Hui Ng as the Jewellers became the first team to reach the next round.

The win sent the seventh-seeds for Cebu seats to 14-Sport Center Bangsaya title to nail down the second semis slot where it clashes with the Quezon City Raiders on Oct. 29.

STANDINGS	W	L
M. Lhuillier Cebu City	7	1
Harbour Pampanga	4	2
Wesco Sat	2	4
Naguru Quezon Eagle	1	4
Huskers Cantonese Cebu	1	3

GAMES TODAY (University of the Assumption)
4 p.m.—NC-Pampanga vs Quezon Huskers

Bernardo, a former PBA player with Pepsi, gave the Snipers their last taste of the lead on a free throw with 13-second left, 80-82.

On his second stint, Daryl Smith nipped the ball to Barajuan, who hit a crowning Manila for the decisive three-point play.

Rizalists went on to pour Cebu with 19 points with Bruno Soria accounting for 16.

Allen Wood for Snipers with 16, with former Alaska forward Cedrick Gurdiel chipping in 14.

Philsoc still looking for swim venue

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MISSED to hold swimming will be a major consideration when the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee meets tomorrow to discuss the venues for the 2005 Games.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain said they are still looking for possible venues after talks to hold the competition in San Pablo City fizzled out.

Baguio City had also expressed desire to host the sport, but the 70-year-old Rizal Memorial pool remains in contention.

"We may have to prioritize that [Rizal] and the shooting range with our P30 million savings," said Buhain, referring to the money the agency saved from its budget under the General Appropriations Act and released to the SEAG fund.

Meanwhile, Philippine Amateur Swimming Association secretary general Chito Rivera said the country is hoping to match, if not surpass, the three gold medals RP won in Vietnam last 1998.

"We hope we can get more because of the strong showing of Miguel Molina, Miguel Molina and Jaclyn Pangilinan," said Rivera.

Paragua averts shutout vs Azerbaijan

MALLORCA, Spain—International Master Mark Paragua came through with his biggest win so far, accounting for the Philippines' only point against powerhouse Azerbaijan Sunday in the eighth round of the World Chess Olympiad.

The 20-year-old former child prodigy whose grandmaster title remains pending, remained reigning world junior champion Shakh Mamedyarov (2668), to 42 moves of a Bristol defense.

But the rest of his teammates floundered against a team aiming to come back from consecutive defeats to Ukraine, Spain Award the United States.

Grandmaster Eugenio Torre, playing his seventh consecutive match, bowed to super GM Vassily Radjabov (2692) in 31 moves of a Pirc defense.

IM Jayson Gonzales, handling black, suffered his first defeat at the hands of GM Ozelli Efendiev in 26 moves of an Alekhine defense.

Rookie Darwin Laylo put co-master equilibrium round against GM Emil Mamedov, losing at Nimzo-Indian duel in 45 moves.

The 1-3 defeat sent the Philippine evening to a chance of 2½ place with 20.0 points, 4½ behind pacesetting Ukraine.

Ukraine was held to a 2-2 draw by Armenia.

Defending champion Russia edged India, 2.5-1.5, to take sole second place with 24.5 points.

The leaders after nine rounds

Qatar (28 boards) 22 Judit—Volokitin 0.5—Nisipeanu 0.5—Gelfand 1—Ivanchuk 0.5—Kramnik, Vlad. 0.5—Kasimdzhanov 0.5—Svidler, Peter 0.5—Bacrot 0.5—Adams, Michael 0.5—Polgar, Judit 0.5—Polgar, Zsofia 0.5—Ganguly, Sasikiran 0.5—Sengupta, Deep 0.5—Sengupta, Abhijit 0.5—Kamsky, Gata 0.5—Shirov, Alexei 0.5—Ivanchuk, Vassily 0.5—Grischuk, Alexander 0.5—Karjakin, Sergey 0.5—Jakovenko, Dmitry 0.5—Malakhov, Vladimir 0.5—Rublevsky, Sergei 0.5—Dominguez, Lenier 0.5—**Philippines** 1—Paragua, Mark 0.5—Torre, Eugenio 0.5—Gonzales, Jayson 0—Laylo, Darwin 0—Mamedov, Rauf 0.5—Efendiev, Ozelli 0.5—Volokitin, Andrei 0.5—Radjabov, Teimour 0.5—Mamedyarov, Shakhriyar 0.5—Ulibin, Nikita 0.5—Ponomariov, Ruslan 0.5—Bologan, Viktor

WORLD SERIES

Stitched-up Schilling keys Red Sox victory

BOSTON—Curt Schilling, his wonky ankle held together by stitches, tossed six courageous innings to help the Boston Red Sox pound the St. Louis Cardinals, 6-2, to seize control of the 2004th World Series Sunday.

The Fall Classic now shifts to St. Louis for games three, four and five beginning Tuesday, with the Cardinals trailing 2-1 in the best-of-seven series.

With only one road win this postseason, the Cardinals return to St. Louis knowing they must make a stand at home if they are to prevent the Red Sox claiming their first World Series since 1918.

As bad as the Cardinals have been on the road, they have been brilliant at Busch Stadium, going unbeaten in the playoffs.

Blood seeping from his injured ankle, Schilling turned in a gritty effort, silencing one unnerved fan on four fists to get the victory despite shoddy backing behind him, including Game errors from third baseman Bill Mueller.

Sturdy, day-long drizzle threatened to delay the start but it gave way to a chilly, blustery wind before the teams took to the field.

Cheers rose from the bleachers, and echoed around Fenway Park as Schilling slowly made his way from the bullpen, intensities focusing as much on the 37-year-old's injured right ankle as his pow-erful right arm.

Schilling was on the mound after doctors, for the second time, stitched a dislocated tendon in place using an experimental procedure tested only on a cadaver.

"I just wish everyone on the planet could experience the day I've just experienced," he told reporters.

"I will never use the words unbelievable and the Lord again in the same sentence. Just the most amazing day of my life," Schilling, a devout Christian, said the injury was so bad in the morning that he could not walk.

"I woke up, I wasn't going to pitch, I couldn't walk. I knew when I woke up there was a problem. I wasn't going to get out to the mound the way I felt.

"I can't explain it but somehow we had put an extra stitch in this time. We took that stitch out and things started to happen.

"Regardless of what happens in my career, I'll never get a feeling like that ever again in my life like I had tonight." Enquirer Francesa released to sale use the possibil-ity that Schilling would return to the mound if needed later in the series.

"I think he's getting a better understanding of his body and he's able to compete at a better his better," said Francesa.

"As far as him pitching again, if his time comes up, of course. Never taken this one game at a time.

"Every time he pitches under these circumstances he'll be evaluated by the medical staff," The Red Sox, as in Game One, struck early and never trailed, scoring two runs in the first and fourth innings to take a 4-1 lead.

Game One not to get the party started for another jubilant Fenway crowd of 35,000 when he cruised off the mound in deep center to score David Ortiz and Manny Ramirez, who had been intentionally walks by a shaky Matt Morris.

Alex Gilles's Pujols scored on a fielding error, Game One here Mark Bellhorn doubled in deep center to bring in Trot Nixon and Johnny Damon.

In the sixth inning, shortstop Orlando Cabrera finish a single off the Good Mor-ner look wall to add two more runs. Reuters

Alex Gilles's Pujols scored on a fielding error, Game One here Mark Bellhorn doubled in deep center to bring in Trot Nixon and Johnny Damon.

RED Sox pitcher Curt Schilling fires a fastball against the St. Louis Cardinals during the first inning of Game 2 of the World Series in Boston, Sunday. Despite playing hurt, Schilling pumped the Red Sox to a 6-2 victory and a 2-0 lead in the series. At left, Cardinals runner Mike Matheny is tagged out by Red Sox second baseman Mark Bellhorn (below) to first to complete a double play. Edgar Renteria of the Cardinals was the hitter.

Montoya tops Brazil GP

SÃO PAULO, Brazil—Juan Pablo Montoya brought the curtain down on his four years with Williams in style as he won the season-ending Brazilian Grand Prix at Interlagos here Sunday.

The Colombian, who joins Ferrari next season, took control of the race after the first set of pit stops and held off the advances of three-team-mate Ralf Schumacher to take the checkered flag.

The victory, by a one-second margin, was the first of the season for both Montoya and the team and was the driver's fourth of his Formula One career, which began with Williams in 2001.

Raikkonen bounded Montoya to the finish line but he could not find the speed to overtake and grab victory.

Ferrari favorite Rubens Barrichello, who started on pole ahead of the pair, had to settle for third as he finished the Brazilian race for the first time since 1996.

Renault's Fernando Alonso's gamble on a two-stop strategy failed to pay dividends as he came home in fourth ahead of Williams' Ralf Schumacher, who in his last race with the team, and BAR-Honda's Takuma Sato.

Sato's result ensured BAR finish second in the constructors' championship behind Ferrari.

World champion Michael Schumacher claimed seventh place, having started 16th on the grid after an engine change, for Ferrari with Sauber's Felipe Massa collecting the final point.

David Coulthard could only finish 11th in his last race for McLaren, while Jaguar's Red Grand Prix was a disappointment after Christian Klien crashed into team mate Mark Webber.

The two got under way on a wet track after rain left 45 minutes before the start. AFP

MONTOYA pours champagne on his head after winning Brazil's F1 GP in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AP

10 die as Nascar-bound plane crashes

MARTINSVILLE, Virginia—Plane sources celebrating Jeanne Johnson's Nascar stock car race-driver. Smoke up a small plane crash reportedly claimed the lives of 10 people connected to Hendrick Motorsports.

News of the tragedy would revealed to competitors at Sun until just after the race ended.

Johnson, who averaged 66,100 miles per hour in a Chevrolet Monte Carlo, had just completed a celebratory victory burnout near turn 4 and was preparing for a bigger celebration of his second consecutive checkered flag when officials of the hugely popular Nascar stock car series told him the news. AFP

PALMER: $ 7.5-million riches

Palmer's 62 yanks Funai crown away from Singh

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Florida—American Diane Palmer shot 10-under 62 to come from three strokes back on Sunday's final round to win the $1.2-million PGA Funai Classic.

Palmer had 10 birdies, and his 62 was the lowest fourth-round score by a winner on the PGA Tour in 2004.

The 36-year-old Palmer finished at 22-under 266, three shots ahead of defending champion and world No. 1 Vijay Singh, who shot 67, and overnight co-leader Steve Stricker, who posted a 70.

The Tour rookie picked up $756,000 and a two-year tour exemption.

"This is going to be something I cherish forever," Palmer said. "Trying to win for the first time, it's awesome knowing I can beat the best player in the world. I'll be lying if I said I wasn't nervous, but I got off to a fast start and had some things go my way. You need a little luck when you win, and I played great." Fijian-bullet Singh, the world's top-ranked player, was seeking his ninth victory of the year.

He was still in the hunt until he bogeyed the 16th hole.

"Anyone on your toes the capability of playing well and there showed it today," Singh said. "That's an incredible round of golf." Palmer, the fifth rookie to win on tour this year, wasn't completely unfamiliar with victory, having won on the Ladies European development tour in New Zealand last year. He also finished second at the Southern Farm Bureau Classic just three weeks ago, his only previous top-10 finish. AFP

Safin clinches Madrid Masters title

MADRID—A change of coach and a change of attitude have helped Marat Safin return to peak form and the Russian number one to score among on the Masters Cup side and optimism.

Safin received a fantastic work in Spain by demolishing Argentina's David Nalbandian, 6-2, 6-4, 6-3, on Sunday to win the Madrid Masters.

"I have now built up to sixth place in the Champions Race and within sight of a place in the tournaments ending tournament in Houston.

"I think I can get to the Masters and get higher in the rankings," said Safin, who had to beat Andre Agassi to reach the finals in Madrid.

"Basically, everyone at the Masters Cup can win. Roger Federer is the favorite...but a lot of other guys can give him trouble.

"I didn't really expect to be winning such good tennis. Even last week I lost in the second round at Basel and everything changed.

All of a sudden it turned out like this." Safin has been working with Federer's former coach Peter Lundgren since April this year and he says he is most impressed with the new influence.

"What can I say?" Safin stated. "He explains things, he teaches, he tries to explain why here and what you have to do to reach the goal. He knows the main things that only a professional coach knows."

Safin made several unforced errors in the second set against Nalbandian, just when the Argentine was there for the taking.

The Safin of old might well have started breaking rackets and screaming at that stage but on Sunday he was able to keep his head down and even refused to let the winners applaud his opponents. Reuters

SAFIN —AP

Manchester ends Arsenal's streak

MANCHESTER, England—The Arsenal streak is over and Manchester United is back in the Premier League title race—but not without considerable scare.

United ended Arsenal's 49-match unbeaten streak with a 2-0 win at Old Trafford on Sunday, with Paul van Nistelrooy converting a penalty and Wayne Rooney scoring his first league goal for the club a minute from the 84th birthday.

The win sees the defending champions establish team status at a better time—United are in pursuit of eight points and looks a two-month scoring drought.

"We said this match could kick-start our season," Man United defender Mo Pochlund said. "Now we are nowhere in a better position where we can get some confidence throughout the team." AP

NEW Orleans Hornets' junior Harrington dunks over Los Angeles Clippers' Corey Maggette in a preseason game Sunday. —AP

Kings cut Chinese guard from roster

BEIJING—Chinese basketball player Liu Wei's quest to become Asia's first ever point guard in the NBA has come to an end after he was cut from the roster of the Sacramento Kings, Chinese press reports said Monday.

The former point guard who once teamed with NBA All-Star center Yao Ming on the Houston Rockets, was released by the Kings following a Saturday night pre-season match against the Charlotte Bobcats, Titan sports reported.

Liu only played in three of the Kings's six pre-season games, scoring two points and getting two assists and four rebounds in 34 minutes of playing time. The 29-year-old, 6-foot-3 (1.88 meters) guard also committed six fouls and six turnovers during his stint.

The sports news reports by coach Rick Adelman and frustrations each 2nd Yao Grandy during the 2003's first two games in China earlier this month when he faced his former teammate in games in Shanghai and Beijing. AFP

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Cantino
Associate Editor Bonnie G. Velarde

ABS, GMA 'tie' in 5 Star Awards categories

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

GMA 7 might have seized beforehand from the 18th that friends for TV would go. On Saturday, the network sent a lean delegation to the annual event organized by the Philippine Movie Press.

ABS-CBN went in 20 out of 53 categories, including best station. The latter rivals tied in five categories. GMA 7 scored a total haul of 10 wins. ABC 5 made a feeble bid to join the network wars by copping five trophies. But to newcomers, Sharlet Arellano, shared the Best Male Newscaster citation with ABS-CBN's Julius Babao.

The multiple winners for ABS-CBN were Boy Abunda, Kris Aquino, Korina Sanchez and Babao. Abunda was proclaimed Best Magazine Program Host for "Kontrobersyal" and Best Show Biz Oriented Talk Show Male Host for "The Buzz." Both programs were in their respective categories.

Abunda's "The Buzz" co-host, Aquino, was named Best Show Biz Oriented Talk Show Female Host and Best Talk Show Host for the now defunct "Morning Girls with Kris and Korina." She shared this last title with Korina, who was also cited as Best Female Newscaster.

Sanchez arrived just in time to accept the award for "Morning Girls." Aquino was a no-show. Abunda said she was at work.

Babao, also accepted the trophies sent by "Magandang Umaga, Bayan" for Best Morning Show and Best Morning Show Host. He later on, behalf of his co-anchors, including his wife, Christine Bersola, who had just given birth.

Who, me?

Dindo Quiaoit, one of ABS-CBN's prized young talents, was the most surprised winner of the night. He bested more acclaimed contenders as Phillip Salvador and Jeorge Estrada, as well as renowned actors like Eddie Garcia, Christopher de Leon and Richard Gomez to emerge as Best Drama Actor. Quiaoit's victory was for his work as "Sunny Bida sang Walnas," which concluded a few months ago.

SURPRISE: Lorna T is stunned to receive the Best Drama Actress for a series that ended last year

SURPRISE 2: Dindo Quiaoit's supporters and his "inspiration," girlfriend Kristine Hermosa who, when it was her turn to accept her award, seemed annoyed that he didn't escort her to the stage.

"In my many years in show business, it's only now that I got an award," he said in Filipino as he accepted his trophy. He thanked people who had helped him and his girlfriend, Kristine Hermosa, whom he referred to as his inspiration.

Lorna Tolentino was also stunned to receive the Best Drama Actress for "Kay Tagal Kitang Hinintay," which wrapped up last year. Since then, she's done two soaps and one reality show for GMA 7.

"Kay tagal ko talaga (ang hinintay) (I really waited so long for this)," Lorna said, and elaborated it to her husband, actor Rudy Fernandez.

As though to say the session was still ripe in making people cry, ABS-CBN's prime-time drama series, "Maalaala," and its drama anthology "Maalaala Mo Kaya," each romped away with a trophy. Best Single Performance by an Actor went to Roderick Paulate for his work on an episode of "Maalaala Mo Kaya."

But GMA 7's "How to Paint Its" was chosen Best Daytime Drama Series; ABS-CBN's "Sigaw," Best Fantasy Horror Series.

Most serviceable

Who's the boss in public service and public affairs?

GMA 7's "Imbestigador" was named Best Public-Service Program; "Debate" secured awards Winnie Monsod and Oscar Orbos, Best Public-Service Program Hosts. "Wish Ko Lang" won as Best Public-Affairs Program; Vicky Morales, ABS-CBN's "Magandang Umaga, Bayan," Best Public-Affairs Program Host.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

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ABS, GMA tie in 5 Star Awards categories

Continued from A33

Best Public Affairs Program: Hoist.

The "Superior" network also took Documentary for Best Children Show and Best Children Show Host with "Dyiknong Pasyo" and its indefatigable presenters. Its debaut "Girls" was picked Best Youth-Oriented Program, Best Reality-Based Competition and Best Reality Board Competition. Hoist went to "Extra Challenge" and its host/director Pedro Bendeven, Eiked Books and Pinyada Bavisadha.

Although she recently left the show amid controversies, Bernardo graciously accepted the trophies on behalf of her former employer and co-workers.

In comedy and sex programs, the PMPC discussion gave split decisions. Spin Master of Channel 7's "Bubble Gang" was Best Comedy Actor, as did Jao Mapa of Channel 23's "Singing Ina" was Best Comedy Actress. Channel 7's "Eat Bulaga" was Best Musical Variety Show, Channel 23 "Asap Mania" was Best Musical Variety Show.

Quite also went Best Musical Variety Male Host for Channel 7's "SOP" but its female counterpart was from the program's dread-ful, "Asap Mania."

Hiran, intriguing

There were intriguing ties. ABS-CBN's "Oh, Fire, Wherever" and GMA 7's "Indefinitely" were both named Best Comedy Drama. ("Bubble Gang" was Best Sing Show.)

The extremely popular reality-based talent searches—Channel 23's "Star Circle Quest" and Channel 7's "StarStruck"—also shared the title Best Talent Search Program. "SCQ's" Lani Misalucha and Jodi Sta Maria, as well as Johnx Mapalespel of "StarStruck Kids," were their Talent Search Program Hosts.

Best Sitcom Male and Female Performance likewise went from the two prime networks. Yassi Chanel and Jr. were Erik Santos, grand winner of "Star in a Million," and Student Icons of "Hiraya", from Channel 7. Ramon Cardillo of "Starstruck," and Bernice Cayle of "Kahalo Kahit Saan" from 23.

Another tie was for Best Lifestyle Show Host, between Charlene Gonzales of "Be Home Sa Diet" and the tri-interviews of Angel Aquino, Dingdong Dantes and Amanda Griffin of "E" But both shows belong to ABS-CBN. Channel 2 and Studio 23, respectively. "Be Home Sa Diet" also won as Best Lifestyle Program.

ABC-5 broke GMA 7's strong hold on documentary production. "The Probe Team Investigates" and its reporters led by Cho Cho Lazaro were named Best Documentary Program and Host. "The Probe Team" even received Channel 7 for more than a decade until last year, when both camps had a bitter falling out.

ABS-CBN shared the documentary kudos with the airing of "10 Years Together: The Pinoy TV Story." Its Best Documentary Special. It was executive produced by Nate Magsanoc-Aldiguia of Amari Pop Productions that has been producing documentaries and TV specials for Channel 2 for the last five years, including the award-winning piece, "Batas Militar."

ABC-5's other trophies were for "Island Flavors" and its hosts led by Chef Jorg Aschauer—Best Culinary Program and Host.

Wacky management and most of the stars of GMA 7 were a no-show, least of the network and its shows still deserved acknowledgement. Judy Ecleo's "You Raise Me Up" with Bob Ligtas and Ara Mina was also awarded to accept her trophy for Best Single Performance by an Actress—for her work on an episode on "Mag-pakailanman." Her also did the opening number with Jessica Sibayan and Jeri Rosenkidd and presented the awards for Best Musical Variety Female Host and Best Drama with Dimples Romana.

The drama's award for his or her, "Indefinitely," was claimed by his son, Dan Fox, who came to the awards night with Tiger stars Marian Rivera and Dingdong Dantes as their Ex.

The Star Award for Broadcast Journalism was given to Jiorg Lacuna, who combined humor and eloquence in his acceptance speech.

"I would like to thank the sponsors and organizers of this organization, my followers and co-workers for the last 40 years," Lacuna, who has a stroke six years ago, said. "My wife should be given an award, too. Ibabarap ang mga wlaps ng bathala (It's difficult to take care of an invalid)."

He said he was proud to be a part of the industry where no one has been "pressured by commercial wealth."

There several awards were given out. Pedo Pascual and Ej Ignacio were chosen Male and Female Stars of the Night. Brianne, glowing in a simple aquamarine gown, muttered, "Thank you," and barely were down the stage, she looked miffed, her boyfriend Brother didn't escort her to the stage.

Real score

GMA 7 is said to have refused participation in the ceremony because of differences with the PMPC. In last month's Free Golden Screen TV Awards, presented by Philippine Entertainment Press Society or Enpress, a group of former PM PC members, GMA 7 ran away with the most number of awards.

Those for the 16th Star Awards for TV was the reduced ex-pectations in Philippine TV. There were three reasons for this, said PMPC president Jolli Bautista-Gaspar in her speech. "Unpa-bawasi ratednats sa ani . . . kasy sa ads from local channels. (There's also gas to topic."

Rizzle Kristo Tabuñar, Star Awards and Dolly Journal) employed their spiels with references to the theme, but it was Regine Velasquez who gave most insight into the history of Filipino entertainers through a VTR. The opening number had her, Juliana and Jeli dressed in costumes inspired by Diana Wonder Woman and Supergirl and dancing to the tune of "I Need A Hero."

But the rest of the production numbers had nothing to do with the theme. In fact, the whole program sorely needed a superhero to punch up numerous boring musical interludes by miscommunicative emcees or bad musical decisions.

For instance, winners for Best Musical Variety Show Male and Female Hosts were just announced right after Best Musical Variety Show. Instead, those were handed out just before the final award, Best Station.

There were embarrassing moments that could have been prevented and should not be committed ever again. For instance, before Daphne Dardo could thank the stage to accept a trophy for "I," the lights shifted to the host's. So she got to deliver her speech later.

The area for celebrity interviews was not secured.

Right after the ceremonies, the ABS-CBN delegation trooped to Uno in Greenbelt 3 in Makati City for a victory party.

ARA Mina, Best Single Performance by an Actress for an episode of "Magpakailanman"

ROBINICK Pontos, Best Single Performance by an Actor for an episode of "Maalaala Mo Kaya"

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

ics rental service

T-bill yields rise across the board

By Michelle V. Rama

TREASURY bill rates rose across all maturities yesterday after banks priced in the economic uncertainties set to be caused by spiraling oil prices, rising inflation and slow progress of Gloc Arroyo administration's proposed fiscal measures in Congress.

The average rate for the 91-day bills reached 7.869 percent, or 9.7 basis points higher than the previously awarded 7.772 percent. The rate for the 182-day paper moved up to 8.051 percent, or 10.6 basis points higher, while that for the 364-day securities rose by 2.2 basis points to 9.026 percent. (One percentage point is equivalent to 100 basis points.)

"In view of the rising inflation as partly triggered by increasing oil prices, people are really looking at high interest rates," said a government securities trader in Manila, which reached 6.8 percent in August, is already expected to breach the government's 6.5 percent forecast of 6 to 6.5 percent in 2004 and 2005.

The trader added that although Congress had committed to pass at least three of the Arroyo administration's proposed revenue-enhancement measures, the progress of these measures could only be reflected positively in the rates if these have actually been passed.

The government is presumed to implement some of the new measures before the end of the year to prevent a credit-rating downgrade, but barely three months before the end of the year, Congress has yet to pass any of them. The former administration's proposed measures include the rationalization of fiscal incentives, the imposition of inflation-related taxes, a performance-based lawsuit system for government agencies, a tax amnesty, the shift from tax to gross income tax, a

[illegible] to petroleum users, an increase in the value-added tax rate, and a franchise tax on telecommunications companies.

The House of Speaker's tax-[illegible] committee said it allowed the rates to rise, but only minimally such as bonds which the gov-

[illegible]

MANAGEMENT EXPERT
RP 'over-preoccupied' with internal problems

By Ronnel W. Domingo

The country is "more preoccupied" with its internal problems and is too divided that foreign investment firms find it the least attractive to invest in, according to a Canada-based business management expert.

Dennis J. Kozinski, dean of the Schulich School of Business in Toronto's York University, yesterday told a gathering of business executives that the Philippines was blessed and should progress more than it has been.

Kozinski, who doubles as the Seagram B. Schulich professorial chair in strategic management, was a guest of the De La Salle Professional Schools Inc.'s Graduate School of Business under its Continuing Executive Education Series.

Citing data from the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2004, the professor said the country stayed with Vietnam the lowest rank among Southeast Asian economies.

"Under WEF's global competitiveness index, the Philippines [is] 76th out of 102 countries and a loser in the region," he said.

The 102 Asia Core companies the methodology under where the Philippines was 61st and last in Southeast Asia, and the public institutions index and business environment index where it placed 90th and 94th.

In the last two indexes, the country was ninth-worst in the region, a rank higher than Bangladesh and Pakistan.

"In terms of public institutions, the Philippines is 90th [out of 102], which means investors really don't like dealing with the government," Kozinski said.

In terms of the WEF's business competitiveness index, the country ranked 76th and within the region was better than Vietnam only.

The IMD has two components the computing operations and economic rating where the country was 56th and the quality of the national business environment index where the Philippines is 77th. In both areas, the country was ninth-worst out of 10 Southeast Asian economies.

Quoting short data from the International Monetary Fund and the UN Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook, Kozinski noted that the Philippines performed the least in terms of export and imports, and in the inflow and outflow of foreign direct investment between 1997 and 2003.

[illegible]

Gov't to form debt, risk management agency

By Michelle V Nunez

TO END fears of fiscal difficulties, the government plans to establish an agency that will be solely responsible for managing the country's public sector debt and devising borrowing strategies.

The agency, to be called the debt and risk management office, will assume a supervisory role in the borrowings of both the national government and government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs). The agency will be an attached unit of the Department of Finance (DOF), and will also help reduce the debts of the national government and state-owned firms.

The plan was to bring down the national government's debt from 70 percent of Gross Domestic Product to only 58 percent, and the consolidated public sector debt from 137.5 percent to only 99 percent of GDP by the end of 2010.

Consolidated public sector debt, as opposed to the national government debt, includes even the liabilities of state-owned firms, local government units and government financial institutions.

Thus, it provides a clearer picture of the country's fiscal position.

Managing the debts of GOCCs has been emphasized by both the executive and legislative branches, after it was revealed that their liabilities were largely to blame for the bloating of the country's public sector debt.

Of the P5.9-trillion public sector debt as of last year, GOCCs accounted for almost half.

Of the national government's own borrowings, a substantial part of it was even set aside to support the state-owned companies.

"We want to formalize and establish a specific group of people whose main task would be to do just that (debt and risk management). We decided it's a better way to manage the situation," said Finance Undersecretary Eric Rocha.

Another finance official said creating an agency that will focus on the way the national government and state-owned firms borrow was necessary because currently, no comprehensive risk analysis was done before borrowings were made.

The official added that while the DOF was considered the head agency of GOCCs, its authority to intervene in their borrowings was not clearly defined.

He said that with the new agency in place, the way state-owned firms handled their finances would be scrutinized more closely.

Rocha said details of how the new agency would be established have yet to be discussed, but that the DOF hoped to put it up "as soon as possible."

Rocha said the creation of the agency might not need legislation. An administrative order would be enough.

He added that the creation of the agency would be done together with the reorganization of the DOF.

Rocha said the DOF, like other government agencies, was now discussing the internalization of its organization structure, including the functions of its attached agencies.

"We need to reorganize ourselves to better address the demands of the economic agenda that has been set forth by the President," Rocha said.

T-bill yields . . .

From page B1

ernment would offset. Deputy Treasurer Edmundo Mendiola said that despite the increase in rates, the demand for the one-year bills was an indication of improvement in perception of the government's capability to address its economic problems.

Both the three-month and the one-year bills were oversubscribed, with tenders reaching P5.45 billion and P6.3 billion, respectively. The demand for the 91-day paper was higher than the government's offering of only P4.5 billion, while that for the 364-day bills was much higher than the P1-billion scheduled borrowing of the government.

Demand for the 182-day bill, however, was lackluster as tenders reached only P2.91 billion compared with the government's offering of P3.3 billion.

"The 182-day is an awkward term which readers find difficult to price. That's the reason why we don't get a good rate for it. But banks have a high demand for the 364-day T-bill because they thought the rates may be going down in the future. This seems to be an indication of improvement in perception," Mendiola said in a briefing after yesterday's auction.

The auction committee accepted 79.82 billion worth of bids for the 91-day bills, P1.86 billion for the 182-day securities, and P3 billion for the 364-day paper.

40th

PRSP ANVIL AWARDS TO TAKE OFF OCT 27

The much-awaited 40th Anvil Awards of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) will be formally launched at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, October 27, 2004 at the Legend Villas on Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City.

Innovative rules and procedures for the submission of entries to this prestigious annual PR competition will be discussed among PRSP members, past PRSP presidents and the media.

Joel Lacsamana of Manila Water and Dulce Baybay Freire of ABS-CBN Foundation, cochairpersons of the Anvil Awards committee, said there will be improvements in the selection of winners for this year. PRSP plans to make the 40th Anvil Awards more attractive and rewarding to the winning participants.

The Anvil Awards are considered as the "Oscars" of the Public Relations industry to recognize and pay tribute to the most outstanding PR programs and PR tools implemented during the previous year.

In a related matter, the new Board of Directors of PRSP wishes to announce that it does not have anything to do, and does not support, the so-called "PR Congress" which is being peddled by the organizers for P9,000.00 per registrant.

The PRSP would like to admonish sponsors, financiers, suppliers and participants of the so-called "PR Congress" that obligations resulting from the unauthorized event will not be honored by the duly-constituted PRSP board.

PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF THE PHILIPPINES

PAID ADVT.

Public told to expect hike in costs of basic services

By Raissel W. Domingo and Abigail L. Ho

THE PUBLIC should accept the pending hike in the rates of basic services to get the economy back on track, according to a consumer welfare watchdog.

Raul T. Concepcion, chair of the privatization Consumer and Oil Price Watch, yesterday stressed the urgency for the country to bond still a threat similar to what had happened in Argentina.

The Latin American country a few years ago suffered a crisis as bad it defaulted on its foreign debts which, in turn, threatened to affect the world economy at large.

"We have to accept problems for increase in the cost of basic services in order to inflict their true costs," Concepcion said. "We have no choice but to reduce the growing budget deficit."

The industrialist said the primary reason for the huge debt was that major infrastructure projects approved by past administrations and the regulatory agencies were funded with debts guaranteed by the national government.

"(The problem is that such projects) were not explained clearly to the public from the start," Concepcion said. "The rationale for a sovereign guarantee should only be acceptable when the projects have passed the litmus test of viability with rate rates being reflected."

Until then, the government should not absorb any debt, he added.

The government has committed to shoulder up to P586 billion of the National Power Corp.'s debt, as well $8000 million of the Mayaland water utility's shortfall into.

The Consumer and Oil Price Watch has committed itself to closely coordinate with the government to ensure that all big-ticket contracts, particularly those in the power and water sectors, are transparent and advantageous to the public.

This is to prevent this country from getting buried even deeper in debts, Concepcion said.

According to Concepcion, the "sins of the past" have taken its toll on the country driving the government to declare a fiscal crisis and prompting it to come up with revenue measures that could help alleviate the burgeoning budget deficit.

"We now have to pay for the sins of the past," Concepcion said during a briefing yesterday. "It's painful, but it's what we have to do. We just have to accept the increase in rates as well as other revenue measures that the government will come up with."

The "true" Concepcion referred to includ ing huge measures that allegedly passed approval even without the thorough scrutiny of the National Economic and Development Authority's Investment Coordination Committee.

He also cited approvals of subsidies that consumers now had to shoulder, as well as the issuance of sovereign guarantees which the government was forced to bear.

Areas that would need the closest monitoring, he said, were the power and the water sectors, as both involved huge sums of cash as well as big repercussions to consumers if contracts were not executed correctly.

For the power sector, he said the COPW would closely coordinate with the Energy Regulatory Commission and the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., particularly with regard to the sale of the Malaya Power Corp.'s generation assets and the National Transmission Corp.'s 25-year concession contract.

Specific attention should be given in the auction of the Transco concession, he said, as this company was one of the worst periods of the severely debt-laden Napocor.

Dwindling EC subsidies threaten to keep countryside in the dark

By Jerry E. Esplanada

(Second of a series)

THE GOVERNMENT effort to light up the remaining powerless communities in the countryside has dwindled to a snail's pace, partly due to the fiscal crisis now gripping the country, according to an official of the National Electrification Administration.

But apart from that, NEA authorities have to contend with financially distressed electric cooperatives—small utilities that provide power to surrounding clusters of communities.

These cooperatives are made up mostly of local power consumers who have joined forces to put up their own power distribution facility.

The government provides loans to the ECs so the cooperatives can operate viably. These loans may later be condoned and passed off as subsidies. Last July, a total of P5.63 billion had been released to 119 electric cooperatives nationwide.

SPECIAL REPORT

Financially distressed

Rural region cooperatives were the top recipients with P502 million, followed by those in Central Luzon (P505 million), Western Visayas (P417 million), Southern Tagalog (P399 million), ARMM (P441 million), Northern Mindanao (P395 million), Western Mindanao (P347 million), Bicol region (P339 million), Central Visayas (P299 million), Cagayan (P277 million), Cordillera Administrative Region (P243 million), Central Mindanao (P234 million), and Southern Mindanao (P192 million).

In 2002, at least 43 of the 119 electric cooperatives were categorized by NEA as financially distressed.

Most, if not all, of the ECs had obtained government loans which totaled P2.94 billion, to date this year.

The top three loan recipients were ECs from Central Luzon (P675.8 million), Bicol (P659.3 million) and Southern Tagalog (P542 million).

According to Gilles Bueno, NEA administrator, the agency planned to "intensify collection of loan payments from the cooperatives."

RA 9136, otherwise known as the "Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001," had earlier provided for the condonation of about P103 billion (of P28 billion) worth of loans.

To ease its budgetary problems, the NEA would not restrict this time to foreign borrowings, Bueno said. "The last time we borrowed money was in the late 1990s."

Debt servicing

A check with the NEA files showed that in July the agency's foreign loans totaled $199.5 million (about P11.1 billion), including $97.5 million from the European Investment Bank, $50 million from the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of the Japanese government and $36.5 million from the US Aid for International Development.

Over the next 12 years, the NEA has projected a total of P12.8 billion will go to debt servicing (an average of P1.28 billion per year).

Other than the usual money problems, troubled ECs can expect help from other cooperatives under the NEA-initiated Task Force Kuryente sisid program, which pools together volunteers from various ECs.

Their activities range from energizing impassable-to-reach villages to rehabilitation of power lines.

The Lanao del Sur Electric Cooperative, one of the country's worst performing ECs, was the first beneficiary of the program.

The NEA will also be seeking the help of ECs in advancing what the President had referred to as "single-digit systems loss by 2010."

"Systems loss is caused by dilapidated power lines and stolen electricity which, by the way is bigger," Bueno explained. "Our present systems loss is equivalent to $500 million."

Good on paper

Last year, the level was 13.68 percent, equivalent to about P3.4 billion. The acceptable level is 14 percent, which happens to be $600 target this year.

RA 7832, also known as the "Anti-Electricity and Electric Transmission Lines and Materials Pilferage Act," was passed by the Ramos administration in Dec. 1994.

Violators of the law face jail terms of six to 20 years, and fines ranging from P10,000 to P100,000.

It also offers monetary rewards (of at least P5,0000) to those who would report power line thefts to the authorities.

RA 7832 looks very good on paper. "However, the problem lies in the implementation of the law," Bueno said.

(To be continued)

Northwest seeks $25 surcharge

By Clarissa S. Ruiten

NORTHWEST Airlines has asked the Civil Aeronautics Board for a fuel surcharge of $25 for each trip between Manila and points in the United States—doubling the rising cost of some airfare.

The American carrier had sought the high-est fuel surcharge for long-haul trips even after it had secured CAB approval in August to raise its fare by $20 for every one-way trip.

Philippine Airlines requested the CAB for an increase in the $8 fuel surcharge to $14 for every one-way flight to the US, Canada and Australia, and to $28 per seat on trips to the Middle East. The flag carrier also sought an additional $2 per sector fuel surcharge on short foreign trips.

The fuel surcharge is added to the ticket price and should be removed once prices of jet fuel wane.

The price per barrel of aviation fuel averaged at $63.05 per barrel from Oct. 1 to Oct. 22 compared to $53.20 a month ago. In June, it was at $44 per barrel.

Taiwanese carrier Eva Air also asked the CAB to allow it to raise the fuel surcharge to $6.400 per leg from $4.50.

Carriers have to seek the approval of the regulator in each destination when they fly before they can impose a fuel surcharge. Airlines that would impose higher air fare without CAB approval would be suspended.

Air fuel accounts for about 30 percent of an airline's operating cost, the second highest expense after labor, according to industry sources.

Singapore Airlines Ltd., Air and Singapore Airlines have filed separate petitions for an additional fuel surcharge.

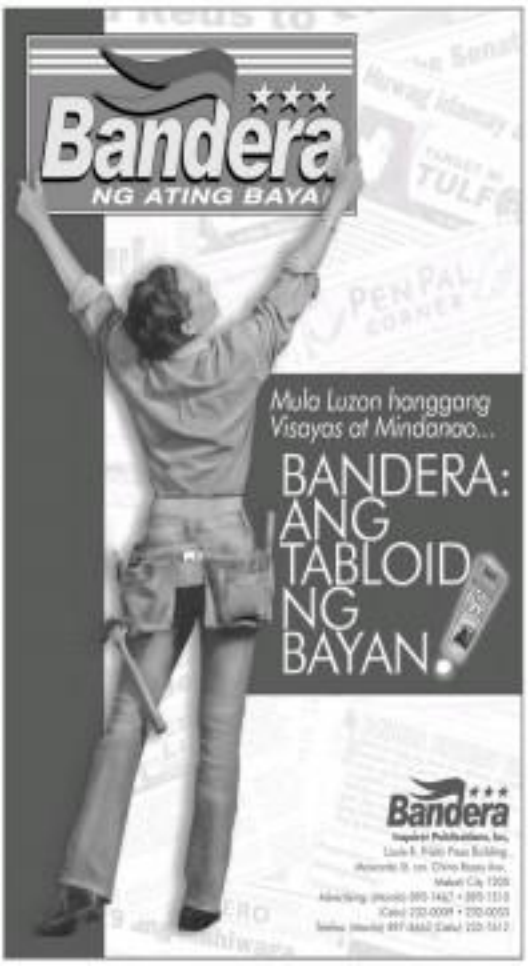
Air Philippines Corp., the low-cost carrier of Lucio Tan, also sought the CAB' go-ahead to resume to start collecting a $6-fuel surcharge on every one-way ticket for flights to China.

Silk Air and Singapore Airlines separately sought an increase of the $3 fuel surcharge to $7 for short trips like those within Southeast Asia, and to $12 for longer flights like those bound for China and India.

Singapore Airlines Ltd.'s fuel surcharge surcharged at $14 for flights to Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

PAL, Cebu Air Pacific and Air Philippines have also asked the CAB to grant their requests to impose a fuel surcharge of between P300 and P1000 on domestic routes.

Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific was the first carrier to be granted an additional fuel surcharge by the CAB. Cathay was originally allowed by the CAB to collect a fuel surcharge of $5 on short trips and $14 on long haul flights.



GMA imposes talk 'n tax

I ARRIVE in the mood for writing jokes, as I can't walk despite special shoes and a cumbersome knee brace. On Saturday and Sunday, I strolled around the malls walking over-drawn and in considerable pain, but I cannot just go from the house to the office and then again without going out. I do not mind a surgery as removing the screw might relieve the pain but will leave my foot partially devoid of feeling. I doubt whether foot reflexology will help because the bone has fused. For now, I might try acupuncture.

Anyway, I have found someone else with a genuine reason for not moving, here are actual headlines taken from American and British newspapers:

Grandmother of 8 makes birth in cave.

Deaf mute gets new hearing in ocular trial.

Child obesity linked to fat birth.

Prime Suspect campaign to run down jaywalkers.

Flaming toilet seat causes evacuation at high school.

House and Senate discuss marijuana—agree to hold joint session.

Stolen dozers reach Australia.

Two convicts escape prison—jury hung.

Milk deliveries are even sourer than before.

Stores sell scientists to hunt President's cat.

In Florida, illegal aliens cut, in half by new laws.

A quarter of a million Chinese live on water.

Drunk gets 90 months in violin case.

Stars bruising for Academy yet dead.

Texans to drop school bus when overpass is ready.

Stop head socks ones.

Prostitutes appeal to Pope.

Stocks starting falls. We take over.

Organ harvesting rich in clients.

Boy may require transfusion of more than 2 pints.

Eye dropped shall.

Bank wins on budget loss more firs ahead.

Bill of women's rights highlights WORLD school.

Women in chaos to work after death.

Tiger Woods feels better after a 69.

* * * *

I DO NOT understand all the fuss about General Garcia. He is alleged to have taken P44 million and washed away another P80 million. But according to an article in the Sunday edition of the Inquirer, generals are allowed "palusot" of up to P200 million. So the above-mentioned two-bit P125 million loot of young men are nothing to just the PMA (Philippine Millionaire's Academy), even Bill Gates quit Microsoft in order to become a general. He told an astonished board, "Sorry, guys. I got orgo where the money is."

With all the money being paid out to generals, cabinets, senators, congressmen, police, customs, the BIR and contractors, I am not surprised that there is virtually none left. I agree with Senator Recto that the Amnesty Bill is entirely useless. As soon as a big tax evader is subject to a filterable theft, he will opt to claim amnesty then be deprived of the right of a huge public disclosure and die a painful three bills on to the legislators to use their "wound judgment." Clearly, a number will not be passed or will be watered down and the rate jams the blame on the lawmakers. Arm down, because whatever the result, she comes out ahead.

If the only trade we win with P60 billion, this will not be enough and we will probably be downgraded. That will mean that borrowing abroad, if still possible, will be very expensive. If the banks are taken from the domestic market, interest rates will rise further; the peso will weaken, mortgages will become more expensive and the whole economy will suffer. Inflation will be over 7 percent for the rest of the year.

I would not be a holder of Philippine dollar-denominated bonds, as I fear that we shall ultimately be unable to pay our external debts. The government will not resurge as Argentina did—that would be too degrading. But I think that it may be forced to ask for a 5 to 8 year grace period, during which it would not pay any interest. This would allow money to be accumulated to jump-start the economy and concentrate on small- to medium-sized companies and cooperatives.

At the end of the grace period, the country should be in a better position to pay off the principal and interest. Creditors would not like it but it would be preferable to resurging and they might be sympathetic if a number of tax-raising bills are passed and an anti-corruption drive instigated. Nevertheless, the action of the Senate should fail, an earthquake or a revolt have been extended lateral fire. To some extent, the risk is priced in through the 4.85-percent spread.

When the PHIBOR hit its peak of 5.865, 3 weeks ago, the degree of risk reached 100 on 1 assessed subscribers to 6055. PHIBOR-BMC on the first sign of weakness. Since morning, the market opened seemingly there started a steady decline. Those who followed the risk indicator were able to get out right at the top. For the next two weeks, the indicator remained high, 90 to 95, but last week, it dropped to 59.

Today, it is down to seven, in this week, I expect BLT signals and a number of stocks with zero or near-zero risk. All subscribers need to do is a wait for my BLT signals and then should be money to be made in the short-term. Congress returns today and investors will be hopeful that they will get on with the business at hand. A great responsibility rests on their shoulders and I am pleased to say they are aware of this but the house also needs to be cooperative. owbarbull@hotmail.com

Banks, quasi-banks ordered to form 3 key committees

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MONETARY Board has directed the boards of all banks and quasi-banks to create three committees that would focus specifically on audit, corporate governance and risk management.

In a recently issued circular, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy-making body stated that the creation of these committees was among the duties and responsibilities of the boards of all banks and non-bank financial institutions.

Under its new directive, the composition of each of these committees, the BSP required the inclusion in each committee of two independent directors.

In the case of the audit committee, the head must be an independent director, preferably with accounting, auditing or related financial management expertise.

The audit committee will oversee the banks' financial reporting and control as well as internal and external audit activities.

"It will be responsible for the setting up of the internal audit department and for the appointment of the internal auditor as well as the independent external auditor, after which both report directly to the committee," the circular said.

"It will monitor and evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control system," it said.

The BSP said the audit committee would have explicit authority to investigate any matter within its terms of reference. It will have full cooperation and cooperation of the management, as well as the full discretion to invite any director or executive officer to attend its meetings.

The corporate governance committee is tasked to review and evaluate the qualifications of all persons nominated to the board and those nominated to other positions requiring appointment by the board of directors.

This committee will be responsible for assessing the board's effectiveness. It will oversee the periodic performance evaluation of the board, its committees and executive management.

It will also decide whether or not a director is adequately carrying out his/her duties, bearing in mind the concerned person's contributions and performance.

The risk management committee will be responsible for the development of the institution's risk management program. Its four core responsibilities are as follows:

- Identify and estimate exposures, principal risks that are likely to occur and are costly when they happen.
- Develop risk management strategies, that are the strategies for managing and controlling material risks and identify practical strategies to reduce the chance of harm and losses.
- Implement the risk management plan, communicate the plan and train control practices to affected parties, and
- Review and revise the plan as needed, ensure that the plan remains relevant, comprehensive and effective.

FDC eyes leisure dev't project

ELEVATE Development Corp. (EDC), the holding company of the Ayala Corporation group, plans to invest next year in a new residential and leisure development in Mactan, Cebu.

This is in keeping with EDC's renewed focus on real estate investment of property development and banking, buy-out sources said.

Sources said the project calls for the development of 12.5 hectares of land in Mactan into a seaside village.

EDC has yet to finalize permits necessary for the project.

The Filinvest group has invested in similar projects, such as the Palm Country Club in Alabang and the Laguna de Taal in Batangas.

EDC has cash to invest in new real estate projects, following the sale of its 13.7 percent stake in the Hong Philippines Corp. to its Taiwanese partner Richest International Ltd.

It received $6.65 million from the sale of its 100 million shares in the company that sells bathroom fixtures and sanitary wares.

In a separate agreement, EDC said it would also sell its 48 percent interest in Hacienda Philippines Property Holdings (HPPH) to a local real estate firm for P13 million. —Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PLDT seen to outpace Globe in 3rd quarter profit results

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co., the country's top telecommunications company, is expected to report quarterly profit increase of as much as 30 percent after aggressively mobile users with innovative products. In total, Globe Telecom Inc., may post the earnings after failing to launch new products.

Analysts said the fourth quarter should be better for both companies as people buy new mobile phones with three Globe and Smart.

PLDT is expected to have performed strongly after it launched in July a service for transferring money via text messaging and hooked up with Hong Kong's i2hi to offer cheaper mobile services to overseas Filipino workers.

No new product

Globe Telecom, jointly controlled by conglomerate Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecommunications, failed to match PLDT's aggressive wireless products expansion, but may have captured new users in the low-end market after heavily promoting its more affordable prepaid services.

Globe is due to announce its quarterly results on Thursday.

PLDT, the nation's biggest listed company, with a market capitalization of $4.21 billion, reports on Nov. 4.

Three brokerages polled previewed that PLDT's profits for July to September would range from P3.2 billion to P6 billion, up from P4.81 billion in the third quarter of last year.

PLDT is a quarter owned by Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd.

Growing subscriber base

Globe is expected to post third-quarter profits of P3 billion to P3.6 billion, compared with P3.2 billion a year earlier, because it did not launch any mobile services during the period.

PLDT, through its fixed-mobile arm Smart Communications Inc. and reseller unit Pilot, has 39 percent of the mobile phone market, followed by Globe with 40 percent.

PLDT said it added more than one million subscribers in the third quarter to pass the 17 million mark. Globe has also announced its.

"The Philippines is one of the bright lights in the telecom sector in Asia," said Citisecurities analyst Mark Constances.

Targeting OFWs

New-buy (PLDT and Globe) are targeting the overseas Filipino to send money home via text messaging. If the two players get a significant chunk of that market, that alone would be an immense earnings scrutiny."

Some eight million Filipinos work abroad, usually sending money back home via banks or transfer agencies...a key lifeline for both their families and the Philippine economy. The central bank projects that remittances will hit $8.1 billion this year, up 4 percent from 2003.

PLDT's Smart unit launched its money transfer service in India for Filipino workers in Hong Kong and the United States.

The text message contains an authorization code that credits it to the Philippine abroad to the person receiving the money.

Smart has a transaction fee of 1 percent of the value of the transfer for both sender and recipient. Banks charge about 3 percent on every $200, and money transfer agency Western Union has an average fee of 1.6 percent.

PLDT said about P620 million in remittance had been routed through Smart's text remittance service as of September.

Globe launched its own text message money transfer service on Oct. 18—a full quarter behind Smart.

While public fears PLDT's money transfer service may be small at present, an analyst from a foreign brokerage house said it might help the company retain its subscribers.

According to Rosanne Baviera, analysts expect PLDT to have full-year net profits of P22.7 billion, nearly double the P11.2 billion of 2003. Globe's net profit is seen rising 20 percent to P3.2 billion. Reuters

RP 'over-preoccupied' . . .

From page B1

"The country's mindset is limited to the status quo," Horvath said. "It is too fragmented with too many political parties."

"Leaders should get to conclusions (in solving problems) and make decisions," he added. "They should focus on how the economy can recover and act on it."

The Swedish-born academic said the Philippines should avoid comparing with countries like China and India as all diverse.

"You should find niches, identify where you are successful. You should develop your own economic strategies, which don't need to be large-scale."

He advised the country's leaders to learn lessons from the experience of Denmark, which is just a touch of the Philippines in size.

"There are close to 7,000 people that PhDs in Denmark, and they are thriving because they are focusing on niches," Horvath added.

He said local companies like San Miguel Corp., which is expanding operations abroad, was on the right track but that there was much more to do.

LIFESTYLE

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 3BM • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

Mineral powder: Foundation, concealer and finishing powder in one

By Ricky Lo
Contributor

All specials aches all done in the case. Youngblood Mineral Cosmetics gives her beautiful, flawless coverage while protecting her skin.

THERE is a time to laugh and a time to cry. This is the way my relationship has been with makeup. When I put it on, people laugh at me and I cry in pain from the lousy formulations. There is also an hour-long process making them when you are in situations where you have to laugh or cry, or both, such as when you get a bad haircut or when you find me your ex, who really does a good blow job, a guy.

I did get to the mineral powder in the market from Youngblood (YB) and I have to say it did leave me looking younger with, not spilling any blood (sweat and tears)—you'll know what I mean if you ever have plastic surgery or invasive facial treatments.

I'll started as a cosmetic line formulated by Jeaine Youngblood Hall, a paramedical aesthetician who assisted dermatologists and plastic surgeons. The line was created to be gentle but with enough coverage to hide redness, veins and dark pigmentation

OHAL M for Warrior. Ultra high-style celebrators Jessica Poyat, Celine Lopez and Wendy Poyat thrilling with host, architect Cleo Cuerva.

PARTY chicks. Louie Poyat, young business girl Rose Montenegro and Celine Salonga.

CHILLING. Dad's top man, Philip Co-Unjieng, with UCinternational Leica Carpo and king of the nightlife, Louie Yamad.

FOOD columnist Heidi Ng, fundraiser Yasmin Crespo and Lifestyle Asia's vivacious Lorraine Bolmonte.

STRANGERS on a Train. Joey Zubiaga, Norman Criselago, JR Isaac and Jaime Criselago.

Hitchcock throws a party

COSMO Mandie's nan and Hong Kong's gain, the divine Zaldivar sisters, Jasmin "Reyna" S. Herbito and Shirley S. Hinayon.

GLITTER'S beauty, Marites Jacinto, with hip interior designer and stylist Miguel Rosales.

NEAR Window-gang. Cool Descanso Manny del Rosario with Joey Carpo, health buff Jacqui Rollins, architect Dan Lichauco and super fan Lorn Cuerva, who is visiting from Texas.

HUGS and models. Super headhunter Nic Bell with international businessman Jacques Degeuquier and his lady-love, attractive model Rachel Soriano.

FUN Toffee Vidal with mother-in-law Flo Cojuangco Gutierrez.

VERTIGO pals. Pepper Tantoco, newlywed Cary Legaspi, hip realtor Maria Antonio and art connoisseur Patrick Reyes.

THE BEAUTIFUL pack. Handsome TJ Trinidad with fan Dhairi Prieto, attractive Yvonne Baumann, gorgeous miss with the Mo Gen Peinado, and cool Mark Baumann.

BEAUTIFUL in look at. Ginger Ignacio, with sisters AM and Tanya Marcos and her tow, good-looking southern gent Quad de la Paz.

ENTREPRENEUR Raul Manzano.

WORLD travelers Cleophee Kalaw C. and her husband, Bobbie Cuenca.

ALL in the family. Playing Cojuangco with daughter, Dr. Lisa C. Ramirez, and brother-in-law, rap photographer Jojo Guingona.

HOSTS at the fun dinner, Lucille Carlos L. and husband, mega businessman Nick Lorenzo, with guests of honor Andrea and Hal Hal C. Zen and cool Ying Ying Cojuangco.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Vitti Hoppe-a-Rachel Mon

I'll bet no one that this young male with the title, brown lineage as a brilliant, multilingual, stylish Southern belle, culture vulture, really knows how to throw a super hot party.

For a recent bash that many members of our scene's hip set hoped to be invited to, Celine decided on a chi-chi theme this time—"Alfred Hitchcock Presents Did M for Mental". The affair was in celebration of the birthday of the gang of three headliners: Annica Poyat, Wendy Poyat Romang and Celine, natch! It was held at the sprawling digs in Forbes Park of the parents of talented architect Cleo Cuerva.

By my favourite, every invitee was being "murdered" with cocktails named Psycho, Vertigo, Rear Window, Stranger on a Train (a fan of Hitchcock's hit movies, in case you're not in the know, dahlings), made absolutely lethally delicious by Absolut vodka.

It was fab seeing the invitees in cool vintage suits and cocktail outfits, proving that Cosmo Mandie's party spirit is family-bred, palangque. Making this point were handsome realtor Marco Antonio, in his concoction with cut mom's in-demand mega architect and interior designer, Amina Rhodesia, together with in-laws, Rosario's young and hip shakers of it, Joel Tantoco and Mindy Weber Tantoco. They were enjoying the popular drink of the night, Psycho!

The celebrators looked ah-ti-cut. Jessica wore a sleek back black with beach ensemble, which she spot on a recent trip abroad. As for her sister pals, Wendy was in another chic black outfit by Dennis Lualdee and Celine looked ultra-glam in her sassy Rhett Eala cocktail dress. These gals had their clothes designed for them and them alone, with an eye toward stopping the show. Mission accomplished, dahlings.

Adding more ambiance to the theme party was terrific decorator and stylist Miguel Rosales, whose magic touch did wonders with the decoration in the house.

With these three young misses, who exude flair and style, throwing this bee, it was safe to be expected that fashion was the main challenge palangque.

Viking newlyweds

I finally went to a dinner hosted by Mandie's super renowned gourmet who can whip up an excellently prepared meal without batting an eyelash—young society entrepreneur Lucille Carlos Lacsin, in her gorgeous home in upscale Dasmariñas Village.

I've been invited to several dinners Lucille gave in the past but unfortunately never made it. This time, I sent my regrets to the other affairs I was invited to, making sure I didn't miss this one.

The informal, super fun dinner was the beautiful couple Mai-Mai Cojuangco and her husband, Andrew Zial, who went in town for a short visit, and the Cojuangco-Gutierrez palangque.

The hostess with the smartest served her famous Chinese fresh lumpia. Everyone who has tried it can't say enough about how yummy it is. And they are so right.

Lucille, together with her husband, popular businessman and Olympian's stud-a-cur service top gun, Nick Lorenzo, showed us how to eat the lumpia by preparing it ourselves from all the cooked ingredients set up.

Well, that was just for starters, dahlings. Next came delicious crispy flown in from Hunanese in Shanghai and chunks de filetes, then the to-die-for Sea Tex duo melted in your mouth. It was followed by the superbly prepared Hunanese Cupo Lapo and, lastly, the delectable shredded pork and cashew nuts. There was also a table full of sweet fruits and cakes she baked herself.

Saying our thank yous and goodbyes after the excellent gastronomic feast, we all—and I mean all—promised not to eat a full meal the next day.

The lesson: If you are lucky enough to be invited to a Lucille dinner, grab it, palangque!

HK's 'Hilton Sisters'

Popular sisters two, better known as Cosmo Mandie as the fabulous famers of Hong Kong, since they have such luxurious as well as long lasts absolutely vivacious, monthly, chic and stylish. Marites Sadhwani Hernandez and Jasmin "Reyna" Sadhwani Herbito, were in Manila recently.

Needless to say, they were seen as only the best restaurants, clubs and top dancing places, having been entertained by many of their close friends. Toward the end of their busy stay, Shirley (she has not been back in Manila for 10 years and was completely amazed by how the city has changed for the better and has become "so international") and Reyna (a frequent visitor) were feted endlessly with luncheons, dinners and cocktails.

The Sadhwani girls were born in Bacolod and raised in Manila. They married cousins Ramesh Bardeja and Harry Hemandani, and settled in Hong Kong where their spouses run boards on their vast business empires.

Wonder drinks

IN THE SEARCH for more effective ways to fight infection and boost the immune system, it has been discovered that some of the most potent remedies come from nature—fruits and vegetables.

Here are some wonder drinks that can improve the quality of your life.

Coconut water

The humble coconut was revered for centuries as a wonder food while also considered a traditional remedy for some health problems. Herbalist James A. Duke cites the use of coconut and its oil as folk remedies for a variety of diseases: bacterial and yeast infections, colds, constipation, cough, fever, tumors, toothache, sore throat, dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation), typhoid fever, gonorrhea, anemia, asthma, etc.

There is even a story about a woman with cataracts who found relief from her problem by applying fresh coconut water in her eyes.*

Weight loss/energy booster

Ingredients:
One glass of fresh coconut water
1 tablespoon of virgin coconut oil

Mix well and drink before you start your morning. This will rev up your system, increase metabolism and give you added energy. The natural anti-bacterial properties of coconut oil will also protect your body from illness.

If you make this your daily regimen even for just a week, you will feel a change in your vitality and mood.

Goji juice

Dr Earl Mindell, who was on the humour "Si, Cuando Habla" said is renowned for his passionate search for higher nutrition, introduces a drink from the Himalayan mountains.

It is said that in the Tang Dynasty (600 A.D.), a well was dug for a Buddhist temple. The well was covered with goji vines. Over the years, berries from the vine fell into the well. It was observed that everyone who drank the water from the well experienced an improvement in their health and better complexion.

In his book "Goji, The Himalayan Health Secret," Mindell reveals the secret to healthy aging. The study of longevity and nutrition shows that many of the longest-living people have something in common...they eat a small red fruit called goji. The berry contains high levels of unique molecules called bioactive polysaccharides that defend the body against pollutants, free radicals (highly active and damaging substances) and disease.

Dr. Mindell will conduct a health forum at 12 noon, Nov 5, at the Manila Hotel. Open to the public, the forum is organized by Dr. Josef de Ocampo, PhD. Call 8927 (0 5400).

Ampalaya Plus

A health enthusiast, Ivanovanian Leon Chiaveanere is now promoting his newly discovered juice concoction. His vegetable-fruit combination has relieved his health problems like overweight, skin outbreaks, migraine. Many who have followed his regimen say they have been cured of psoriasis, hypertension, constipation, asthma, arthritis, etc.

Health drink

On an empty stomach, take one tablespoon of apple cider vinegar (preferably organic like Bragg or native cane vinegar/pamburong) mixed in one glass of purified water. Drink this special concoction

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Some of the most potent remedies come from fruits and veggies

Ingredients:
½ fresh cucumber
½ green bell pepper
½ pineapple
½ red apple
½ cucumber (peeled/seeded)
2 cloves fresh garlic

Put all ingredients in a blender and drink when smooth. Beginners may strain the fibrous parts and just take the liquid. This may be taken on a trial basis until the health problems disappear. "Unsweet" drink is to benefit our effects.

For free health handouts, call 7111158 to 58.

Health, beauty regimen

Dab some virgin coco oil on the face to remove makeup. Rinse with your favorite cleanser. Then add a drop or two of cocoa oil as moisturizer. You will have silky smooth skin when you wake up in the morning.

Uplifting affirmation

"I am renewed, nothing and no one can disturb my inner peace, and this is so."

Love and light!

Source: "The Healing Miracles of Coconut Oil," by Bruce Fife, MD

Two new breath freshener flavors

PFIZER Consumer Healthcare, maker of CoolMint Listerine PocketPaks portable oral care, introduces two flavors—non-mint Cinnamon and spearmint Freshburst.

LISTERINE PocketPaks

The new flavors of Listerine PocketPaks provide the same benefits as the original CoolMint, leaving a cool sensation in the mouth as it fights bad breath germs.

Listerine PocketPaks dissolves instantly and releases germ-killing ingredients. It is supposed to kill 99.9 percent of bad breath-causing germs on contact and clinically proven to control bad breath. The oral care strips are also sugar and calorie-free.

The new Cinnamon and Freshburst flavors will soon be available in supermarkets, drugstores and convenience stores nationwide in 24 strips. They will cost the same as CoolMint Listerine—P95 for one PocketPaks and P180 for a pack of two.

Help for insomniacs

PEOPLE suffering from insomnia may want to try Better Sleep, a 100 percent all-natural extract of a rare medicinal mushroom called Lotiwati.

The mushroom reportedly acts as a tranquilizer and reducer to help improve a person's sleeping cycle. It is also said to enhance brain function by improving memory, increase energy, relieve stress and protect the brain.

Better Sleep, approved by the Bureau of Food and Drug, is supposed to be all-natural, non-narcotic and non-addictive. It is a recipient of the National Consumer Affairs Foundation's award for Outstanding Herbal Food Supplement for Insomnia.

The product is available at Mercury Drugstores, Watsons, Shoemart Drug, Sanmonte Drug, Unimedico Drug, St. Anthony's Drug, selected Rustan's, Puregold Plus and Handyman stores and other leading drugstores. Call 7254376, 725-6330 or text 0918-9269347, or visit www.better-herbalist.com.

Estrogen-free pill now in the market

ORGANON Phils. Inc. launched recently a unique estrogen-free oral contraceptive pill. The new product, containing only one female hormone, the progestogen Desogestrel (75 mcg), was developed to give women who cannot or should not use pills containing estrogens, a choice.

Some women suffer from side effects like breast tension, nausea, edema and headache when they use pills with estrogen. The pills are also not recommended for breast feeding women.

Desogestrel is a simple, continuous 28-day tablet regimen. It is now available in leading drugstores nationwide.

E-mail organon.ph@organon.com or call 8815-4000.

VITA-ACE beauty cap moisturizes and protects the skin to maintain and enhance its natural beauty and radiance.

VITA Velvet anti-aging ampoule reduces visible aging signs and revives skin's elasticity and suppleness.

A SOOTHING facial mask locks in the anti-aging nutrients of Vita Velvet.

A PAMPERING massage completes the Vita Velvet anti-aging regimen as it calms the senses.

Improve your 'face value'

VITA Spa facial treatment products

By Joyce C. Abatayo

GET rid of tired-looking skin and have the freshest face around Me.

Facial Care Centre launched recently two Vita Spa facial treatments that give the full benefit of a thorough facial complete with a rejuvenating massage to help you acquire a whole new glow.

"The Vita Spa treatment that we launched a few weeks ago is one of our top-selling services in the moment and there are two types: the Vita ACE treatment and the Vita Velvet treatment," said Aimee Crumley, Facial Care Centre Makati branch manager.

"Both treatments are really good for the skin," she added. "And they make your skin glow and radiant (and) nourish it (as well), making your skin beautiful after the treatment, and showing dramatic effects later."

More intense

Crumley said the Vita ACE facial treatment takes an hour while the Vita Velvet takes about an hour and a half. "The Vita Velvet treatment is more intense, that's why it takes a little bit longer to finish," Crumley explained.

The Vita ACE treatment replenishes and maintains the skin's natural moisture and radiance to prevent the early onset of aging. It also moisturizes, protects and strengthens the skin's defenses.

The treatment supplies the skin high concentrations of vitamins A, C and E that serve as antioxidants and "help shield the skin from harmful elements like dryness, aging, pollution, smog and ultra violet rays that not only dam-age skin tissues but also make the texture of the skin dull and rough.

Anti-aging treatment

The Vita Velvet treatment revitalizes the skin with a special rehydrated anti-aging ampoule specifically developed to reduce visible signs of aging. The soothing facial mask infuses anti-aging nutrients to penetrate the skin. The effect is also felt longer.

Both facial treatments are equally soothing to the senses.

A relaxing massage completes the treatment.

"The Vita Spa facial treatments are safe choices," Crumley said. "But we don't give this to people with intense skin breakouts—we give an alternative cleansing treatment."

Facial treatments are considered essential to any skin care regimen. They help maintain the skin and avoid future problems. But finding the right facial treatment is a challenge. It is important to be sure that a facial center knows what it is doing.

Facial Care Centre's dermatologists always check a clients' skin type before deciding on what procedure to follow. This helps ensure that the treatment is suitable to the client.

Facial Care Centre Makati is located at G/F Dorne 6813 Ayala Ave. cor. H. V. de la Costa St., Salcedo Village. Call 816.1281 or 813.5123.

Mineral powder: Foundation, concealer and finishing powder in one

coverage to hide redness, veins and dark pigmentation on faces of patients of rosacea, lupus, microdermabrasion and chemical peels.

A test of faith

After smoking on another beauty story for the Inquirer, makeup artist Rubie Ouano put on "Youngblood Natural Mineral Foundation (P1,775), available at all Beauty Bars) to neutralize on my skin from—would you believe—using the wrong toothpaste!

The orange thing was that this "foundation" looked like loose powder but was in reality a concentrated mineral powder/foundation that could be applied with cupcups for heavier coverage, a brush for light coverage and even mixed with moisturizer or sunscreen to become liquid. It is a water-resistant foundation, concealer and finishing powder in one!

She applied the powder-on-my-chin using a dry brush sponge and told me that a little under my eyes would help and that with this foundation, I wouldn't need concealer. Instead... I thought... this thing was going to flake off by the time Amber left me with lipstick tester in hand, which I would later swish was a goo.

At 1 always do at a time of desperation (that day I just had to buy a single pair of Ina Garter eyeshadows), I left the store with a full cupid to the debt of Cuba and, of course, without the cone from that I really needed. But Odd other home a customer of YB Mineral Foundation, which was the best thing that ever happened to my face since the last spa.

The foundation was put to the all-night drink test at Rustic's. By the time I got home after midnight, there was still an ego of evidence on my chin or dubious under my eyes. Perhaps I was too drunk to see straight or, a bigger perhaps, the key was in the application and obviously Barbie, being a pro, would do a better job than me any day, sober or not.

The kiss-proof test

The next test came the following evening at the cocktail launch of Jacques Polidano's new beauty magazine, Metrosexy. Boys and girls, if you are looking for a staple shadeless, waxy-poo effair with enough silicone to launch another Chinese astronaut into space, this one is. What better occasion to test out your new magic powder foundation and YB Lip Shine in Stardust? (This lip color, PT75, although great alone, is the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of lip colors—when worn over vampish red, it easily turns into muppet-ish pink.)

I wore nothing but YB Natural Mineral Foundation, mascara (P775) and YB Lip Shine in Stardust with Dolcesqueky lipstick in Cinnamon (yet another item I didn't need than left to my Cuban debt). I also didn't need a touch-up when one of the editors, Raul Matsuura, and photographer Patrick Di called for pictures. I had still taken need to enter a puff's-ing nose by dinner.

There were two minds I used whenever I heard the price of an expensive face cream. I also used the same two words when my dermatologist gave me a hydrocortisone injection on my face. And that night, when I got home, I had to say the same two words to concentrate: Jesus! Christ!

Nina Montelibano, marketing officer of Beauty Bar, said since its delivery this month, the Youngblood line had been selling briskly with no advertising or press. The products speak for themselves and the well-stocked glass display of the "before" and "after" looks is a strong sales tool.

Beauty Bar-used regular people made up by Barbie Ouano, instead of professional models to illustrate the products' efficacy. Each Beauty Bar has a resident makeup artist who uses touch customers' appearance techniques and help them choose colors.

More multi-use products

The YB foundation also comes in the portable Mineral Compact Foundation (P1,295). Other fabulous multi-use products, which I stupidly did not buy because I was too busy running up the debt of Cuba with other things I didn't really need, are Mineral Bio Getting Powder (P995), Crushed Mineral Blush (P695) and Loose Base (P1,695). The rice and cornstarch-based Mineral Skin Setting Powder is not only a finisher, color corrector and toner but also a primer before any foundation. As a primer, it absorbs excess oil on the face to create a matte look for a smooth canvas.

Crushed Mineral Blush can be used not only as cheeks but also on eyes and lips when blended with lip balm or gloss. Crushed Mineral Eyeshadow (P850) can likewise be used as blush or lip color. Loose Base can be used alone as an all-over powder bronzer, with body moisturizer for a subtle glow or with foundation for extra richness.

Useful makeup tips and more product information can be found at www.ybskin.com.

E-mail the author at bingg_jo@inquirer.com

CAN has mature skin with visible circles under the eyes. Her Youngblood look is dramatic and gives her a youthful appearance.

FOUNDATION: Mineral Cosmetics enhances and protects Anna's color without her spending too much time on makeup application.

Why spirits of the dead return

When I visited the two-story home of my aunt in Bacolod City," related a young executive, "the door was opened by a man in a doctor's gown. When I asked if my aunt was there, he said she was upstairs. As I climbed the stairs, I glanced back but the man wasn't there anymore. Upstairs, I told my aunt I didn't know a doctor lived at the ground floor. She was surprised and asked how I knew this. I said he opened the door for me. My aunt suddenly turned pale. She said a doctor used to live in that house, but he died several years ago."

This is not the first time the young executive saw a spirit of the dead. In fact, for him, seeing a ghost is as natural as seeing a live person. He sometimes cannot even tell whether he is seeing a ghost or a living human being because he talks to ghosts the way he would to a flesh and blood person.

On another occasion, he related to me an extraordinary incident. He was in the home of his relatives when a flintlock rifle fell from the ceiling and landed on the sofa. The hanging rod broke.

No accident

Everybody thought it fell by itself, but my friend pointed out it could not have dropped accidentally otherwise, it would have crashed on the floor instead of the sofa, which was not directly under the lamp. He said he clearly saw somebody pull the rifle out and place it on top of the sofa. He alone saw the ghost.

Stories of personal encounters with the spirit of the dead are commonplace, despite frantic denials by fundamentalist Christian religious and materialist activists who have never investigated the matter in depth. Spirit manifestation is a universal phenomenon and is not peculiar to any one country. But it seems to happen more often to some countries in Asia than in others.

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

Saved from ruin

Why do ghosts appear? To communicate an important or urgent message to the living in one reason. For example, a grandfather who suddenly died appeared to his grandson in a dream to reveal a hidden land title that the family needed to save their financial burden. That piece of property was unknown to any family member.

In the dream, the grandfather pointed to a leg of his bed which had a secret compartment. The family found the title, said the property and was saved from bankruptcy. The grandson to whom the grandfather appeared is a well-known anthropologist at the University of the Philippines.

Healing a feud

Another interesting case is that of a young Filipino businessman who suddenly died of a heart attack. His wife was a nurse in Saudi Arabia when he died. After his burial, the wife decided to take her children from her in-laws' home where they were staying. Apparently, they did not get along very well.

The next day, a headless rooster suddenly appeared on the mirror of the woman's dresser saying, "Help, please." It was the beheading of the dead man.

A séance was conducted, with a medium of the dead man as medium. Through automatic writing, he gave several important messages to his family, especially to his wife. He did not want her to take the children out of the family compound. Eventually, the ill feelings or conflicts among them were resolved.

Murder victims usually appear as ghosts to receive that justice is done. We can recall the celebrated cases of the Vizconde massacre and the brutal murder of Nancy Kwan Fernando, whose spirits came back to seek justice.

In need of prayers

Most ghosts are harmless and should not cause alarm. Many don't know they are already dead or refuse to accept their death. Some only wish for prayers and so be elevated to a higher plane of consciousness. They respond positively to sincere acts of prayer and spiritual assistance from the living.

Spirits attached to the living become earthbound. They cannot let go of the material plane and may sometimes try to possess and harm living beings. Most ghosts are sick and need to be exorcised.

The spiritualist movement in the west was born because a ghost manifested itself to the Fox family in 1848 in Hydesville, New York by rapping on tables and knocking on walls.

Ray Stanford relates in the book "Spirits and the Spirit World":

"The Fox family devised a simple method of communicating with the unseen presence. They asked it questions that could be answered simply 'yes' (one rap), or 'no' (two raps). Using the code, the presence identified itself as the spirit of a murdered peddler whose body had been buried beneath the Fox cottage. News of the rappings spread rapidly in the small town, and soon the Foxes invited their neighbors to hear conversations with the dead peddler's spirit."

The spiritualist movement soon spread to England and other parts of the world.

Although one of the Fox sisters, Margareth, eventually confessed they faked the rappings, the spiritualist movement continued to grow and even attracted such famous personalities as United States President Abraham Lincoln, British writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and world renowned scientists Carl Jung, Sir William Crooks and Thomas Edison.

Why do spirits of the dead return to earth? Because they never left in the first place!

E-mail reactions to this column to jlicauco@pldtmail.com.ph

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Full straddle series

This yoga-inspired exercise stretches the waist, inner thighs, hamstrings (back of the thighs) and buttocks.

Equipment
Exercise mat

Exercise technique

1. Sit in a full straddle with one straight leg and flexed feet. Tighten up the muscles in the front of your thighs (this helps to relax and lengthen the hamstrings or muscles at the back of the thighs). Hands should be on top of your thighs.
2. Bend forward from the waist and reach for your feet.
3. Then, carefully turn towards one leg still reaching for your foot.
4. And, finally, straighten up and rotate your waist and look behind you. One hand goes behind you and the other hand stays in front.
5. Slowly return to starting position.
6. Repeat the whole series on the other side.

Performance tips

1. Keep your buttocks pressed against the floor in all the positions. Avoid lifting your pelvis to reach further.
2. If you cannot reach your toes, hold your shins or ankles.
3. Try to relax as you hold each position. Keep your shoulders free from tension.
4. Focus on keeping your inhalation and exhalation even and consistent.
5. In position 3, start the rotation from your waist, moving into your shoulders and neck.
6. If you cannot maintain a straight back in the starting position because your hamstrings are not as flexible, roll up a towel and put it under your buttocks. This will elevate your pelvis and make it easier to sit tall.

Repetitions

One breath equals breathing in and breathing out. Hold each position for three to five breaths.

Coping with chocolate ...

From page C8

take in a large number of calories quickly since chocolate at the end of a meal when you are not very hungry. You are less likely to overindulge at that time."

If you want to have chocolate as a snack, Rallo says it's better to take it in liquid form rather than a chocolate bar. A glass of rice fat milk with cocoa powder can range from 91 calories (one tablespoon cocoa plus artificial sweetener) to 132 calories (two tablespoons of cocoa plus two teaspoons of sugar) compared to a chocolate bar that has 230 calories. The chocolate milk is also more filling because of its protein, so you get fewer calories but are more satisfied.

* * *

The Orthopedic Institute will hold a five-week drop-in-led "Sports & Fitness for all Ages" on Saturdays, Nov. 6 at Club Filipino. Topics include: *Are Your Kids Ready for Sports*, Sports at 70, Substance Abuse Management in Athletes, The Female Athlete, and various talks on badminton, duathlon, swimming and taekwondo. Php 450 registrants get lunch plus two snacks. Call 7270001 loc. 8221 or 7257672.

To Fitness & to Health "Run a new time slot, 9 (6:30 a.m., Mondays to Fridays, Studio 23

Visit www.thejunefitness.info

Coping with chocolate cravings

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Jhoon

There are many theories why women have chocolate cravings. They are supposed to improve mood by raising serotonin (compounds that are supposed to affect mood), simulate the feeling of being "in love" via an ingredient called PEA, and foster a euphoric effect similar to marijuana. Women are also said to be conditioned from childhood to associate chocolate with celebrations or to think of it as a reward.

Whatever the reason, chocolate is the most craved for food. And chances are, women read-

ing this article may be having a hard time controlling that chocolate cravings.

Well, there is no need to go to chocolatiers to

continued on page

beware of someplace dismal or finishing an entire Cadbury bar when you feel stressed. There are practical ways to cope with chocolate cravings.

Q: How many calories are there in a piece of chocolate? A: Who cares!

The three most common types of chocolate are dark, milk and white. All three types contain about the same number of calories—200 per 1.5 ounces, the size of a typical chocolate bar, one small pack of M&Ms and some Hershey kisses.

Before eating any chocolate, first break it into pieces. This allows the calories to leak out!

One chocolate kiss or one chocolate square has about 25 calories. That isn't much compared to one cookie that has 50 calories or one soda cracker with 80 calories.

If you can stop after one or two pieces of chocolate, try only to buy a whole bar and just break off a square or two when you are in the mood. Even, stick to single mini-size servings to keep calories under control.

Store your chocolate on top of the refrigerator.

Calories are afraid of heights and will jump out of the chocolate to protect themselves.

If you have out-of-control chocolate cravings, do not keep chocolates at home. If I have to fetch between your wallpaper and chocolate, my money is on the chocolate. It doesn't mean that you are weak. You are just human and female. Like me. That's why my chocolate stipper hook like Dove candies, cupcakes, pudding and brownies are all limits in my house.

Put "eat chocolate" at the top of your list of things to do today.

That way, at least you'll get one thing done.

Many years ago, when chocolate cravings were getting the better of me, I put them under control by purposely having something with chocolate every day. I would either have chocolate-flavored oatmeal for breakfast (I made before I saw having chocolate pudding) or a glass of chocolate milk. I used cocoa powder, which only has 12 calories per tablespoon but still has a rich chocolate flavor. Calories were cut even further by using non-fat milk.

I accomplished three things by putting chocolate on my "to do" list: Chocolate was no longer a "forbidden" treat, any cravings didn't rise to danger levels because I could look forward to having a little chocolate everyday and calories were kept to a bare minimum.

After about a week or so, believe it or not, I got a little sick and tired of having chocolate everyday. It lost its hold on me. Today, I only crave for chocolate right before my period or if I eat out and see a particularly tempting concoction on the buffet table or dessert cart.

The way to a woman's heart is through a box of chocolates.

Ask yourself why you have strong cravings for chocolate. If it's because your period is up to way, that's normal. But if it's because you are nursing a broken heart or you have "issues" you need to confront, a good therapist will do you more good than all the chocolate in the world. Unless because I love boxes there.

Chocolate isn't just for breakfast.

Weight management experts recommend eating chocolate only as a dessert, never as a snack and never on an empty stomach. Professor Barbara Rolls of Penn State University told the Scripps Howard News Service, "People don't crave chocolate for some thing like oil, but because of its sensory properties and calories. It tastes very good and it is an energy dense, so you can

CONTINUED ON